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Editor

Yek Raj Pathak

Publisher

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

KANTIPUR CITY COLLEGE

(Affiliated to Purbanchal University)

Putalisadak, Kathmandu, Nepal.

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Editorial

In the domain of journalism, the statutes and procedures are a constantly flitting phenomenon. As we write articles for this journal, social networking site as *Facebook* and *Twitter* has taken a shape of credible medium in mass communication. Only a button separates the users of this technology from this vast, ever-growing possibility of mass communication. Technology has already emerged victorious over traditional forms of mass communication, most importantly the newspapers. Many other forms of media outlets rather than newspapers or broadcasts are now gaining influence. This is the result of media and research spurred by its content.

KCC Media Journal is the first step launched by this college in media research. It will mount initiative for media research and academic write-ups. As the country's journalism in form of newspaper is entering 115th year, one and all have noticed that media has progressed little in research. This journal is one of the small steps taken forward in fulfilling this paucity. It will play a crucial and effective role in the form of a bridge between professional journalism sector, research and academic exercise. If the college feels it is a necessity to strive towards mass communication and journalism, it will stretch its threshold to the field of investigative writing and research to spread its wings to the world community.

The journal in its current stature is preoccupied with upholding an inseparable component of journalism — 'accountability'. It also encompasses diverse aspects of development, rights of the *Dalits* and the marginalized communities, for which the media outlets must make a steadfast commitment. The journal further elaborates on the aspect of community radio and its exercise, and underscores the need for implementing the *Right to Information (RTI)*. The journal also straddles the system of media management and its exercise including the significance of information in connection to editing news reports.

I have already mentioned that this is the first step. So there is need for collaboration for the same. And all of us are well-acquainted with the fact that we can live and learn life more from failure than from success. We need collaboration of all in this venture in the coming days, whether we succeed or fail. I would like to extend my gratitude to the *Kantipur City College* management and all its members for creating such an environment to publish this journal. This step will not succeed without thanking Prof. Rama Krishna Regmee, who has inspired each and every word penned in this journal and Abhas D Rajopadhyaya, who made this publication possible. Likewise, all writers deserve the best of our gratitude.

I would like to urge all to participate in bringing out this journal, which remains a common platform. This step means a positive step forward for us, who have tasted a sour experience of failing to bring out an academic journal after studying and teaching on journalism for a long period of time.

Messages

KCC-drive for research

Research, the key component of the academic and professional studies in *Kantipur City College*, figures in both curricular and extra-curricular exercises at various levels. Students are encouraged to learn techniques of research as they engage in project works, case studies, on the spot surveys, field visit exploration, and thesis-pursuits. *KCC Media Journal* provides teachers and students with additional tool to enhance enquiries and access areas beyond the premises of college. It is through this instrument that they share their expertise with the academia and professional sector in the broader arena of society.

The journal addresses the need of the society by discussing problems in myriad dimensions. The issues explored in the journal help promote public awareness besides making the academicians and professionals enriched in knowledge. Contributors to the journal, as readers may discover, have worked hard to make their presentations both refreshing and invigorating in content and style. Efforts, it is hoped, will be made in future to make that spirit and approach sustainable.



Suman Katawal
Chairperson

Publication fuels academic exercise



Pralhad Karki
Managing Director

KCC Media Journal symbolizes KCC's mission to make its faculties and students self-starters and competent in stimulating self-initiative in exploring issues and finding solutions to problems. It opens opportunities for the academia to set the agenda for the society through knowledge transfer. If operated with care, the wisdom and expertise that is available in the multi-disciplinary faculties within KCC could reach through the journal to the general public and the industry.

As a carrier of expression, this journal seeks to develop research taste among those who contribute to it and those who read or use it in profession. Its emphasis on presentation skills is compatible with the standard approaches pursued by various research publications. The cross-thematic exploration that *KCC Media Journal* has initiated could chart an innovative path for future researchers besides facilitating the process of adding value to academic works.

A bridge between academia and profession

Bonding the academia and the industry constitutes one of the goals of KCC. The *KCC Media Journal* underpins the spirit more tangibly in that it seeks to serve as a bridge besides supplying nourishments essential for promoting strategic partnership between them. It is through the publication that both can enhance their mutual interests. As the research-centric works of the journal consolidate their base and begin impacting, the industry could find in them some solutions to problems they practically face. Similarly the academicians of KCC will derive added value from their interactions with the industry.

It might not be an act of exaggeration to expect the journal to evolve as live face-book of multi-faculty KCC, which has been serving as a national institute for the last 15 years. As it spreads its wings, the *KCC Media Journal* will have to cater to the emerging need of many in various parts of the country.



Er. Rabi Shrestha
Principal



KCC MEDIA JOURNAL

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Accountability: A Recipe to Discipline Media

RAMA KRISHNA REGMEE

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Abstract

The sense of accountability is something that is missing in various sectors in Nepal. Creating various sorts of excuses to evade accountability appears to be the prevailing rule. This context should be taken into consideration while discussing media accountability in the country. In this regard, the discourse on media accountability, which has been consolidated through various works of western scholars over the past 75 years, should also be explained. Appropriate explanation of answerability and liability is also desirable in mapping the accountability of media. Pursuit of answerability could make Nepali media more responsible.

Keywords: media, accountability, answerability, liability, culpability, media literate citizenry, eastern thought of duty, social responsibility

Media accountability is a theme that emerges as a very serious issue in Nepal as and when journalists or media institutions publish or broadcast matters, which are considered objectionable by the public. It remains in press-discourse for some time engaging government, private sector, intellectuals and people of various walks of life. The discussion results in an impressive baggage of advisory for the media and all those who work in it. Then it slips into deep slumber with media, not caring to re-visit the suggestions and people not motivated in further assessing media-performance.

The trend is not something specifically attached to media. It covers other sectors as well. The public uproar created over patients' untimely deaths in some hospitals or nursing homes over the past few years is known to many.¹ Equally familiar is the recent hullabaloo over cooking gas shortage in the market because of brokers' tricks and mismanagement of suppliers.² The intensive screaming over series of bus accidents in highways is still in public memory.³ Instances like these are directly related to the issue of accountability and someone or institution should be

accountable for the acts. The practice of taking responsibility, however, is something that remains missing in Nepal. It is, in a sense, usually replaced by a trend of passing the buck to others or manufacturing one or other excuse for evading responsibility.

Politicos, in particular, have been basking under the trend of not being accountable to what they are supposed to do. They failed to produce a constitution in four years of the *Constituent Assembly (CA) – I* (28 May 2008 – 28 May 2012). No leader or political party took responsibility for this failure. Yet they promised voters in November-2013 election that they would deliver constitution in one year after the inception of *CA – II* (2014 onwards). Voters had limited options; they had to pick up from the same politicians, who let them down. But they wisely reshuffled the parties' positions and strength. Political parties could not understand the assessment of people and they once again failed to finalize the constitution by 22 January 2015 as pledged during poll-campaigns. Each party in CA blamed the other for the fiasco. No one has taken the responsibility for not being able to keep the public promise.⁴

The backdrop described above should be considered as a context, while discussing the issue of media accountability in Nepal. This will help explain the scenario, in which media pursues the track of taking accountability or evading the same. It is, of course, difficult for media to be accountable in an atmosphere, in which others take responsibility lightly. But media

¹ A general survey of media coverage after strike in hospitals, nursing homes in *Biratnagar, Butwal* and *Kathmandu*, during 2006, 2010 and 2014 respectively.

² News analysis of cooking gas shortage in winters in Nepal over 2012-2015 period.

³ *Kathmandu* dailies' OP-ED page write-ups following 13 October, 2011 *Khurkot-Nepalchok* bus accident, 2013 bus accidents (12 January at *Bhim Dutta Highway*, 6 July at *Madi Bridge* and 15 July at *Dhading*) and 20 November 2014 bus accident at *Bheri* in *Jajarkot* district.

⁴ Information based on Nepali media coverage of CA and 2013 November election during 2011-15 period.

has no choice. Since it has to serve the public interest, it has to be accountable for what it does. The theme of accountability should be clearly defined for it to enable it to practice accountability – into pages, radio waves, online sites, TV screens and also into social media. For doing this, the concept of media accountability should be clear to media.

This write-up intends to present some reflections on the concept and some of its tools on the basis of impressions gathered through general study of works and write-ups of some notable communication scholars posted in websites. It, however, does not make an attempt to shed light on the status of media accountability in Nepal.

ABC of Media Accountability

What does media accountability mean? This is a question that sometimes media persons are not clear about. Some follow dictionary meaning and understand that accountability is "the quality of being accountable; especially: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions." A few scholars explain accountability as a very positive concept – a mindset – which shapes goals and guides actions of individuals and institutions. They also attach a sense of morality to accountability and underline the need to look at one's actions in the light of implications on not only their lives, but also on those of others and the life of society. Their emphasis is on relevance of accountability to people's personal lives, business, government and other professions including media

Media, as a watchdog of society, expects all to be accountable and the moment people and institutions are not accountable, it reports and transmits how responsibility is being evaded. If there is any cover-up or indifference or denial for avoiding responsibility on the part of individuals or institutions, media covers it extensively as a part of its professional duty. It should understand that it is natural for others to expect accountability in media. Experts point out media accountability is generally reflected in its products, behaviour and the way it covers issues, events and people.

Modern journalism has witnessed western media scholars paying special attention to media accountability for the past 75 years. Any talk or discussion on the issue of media accountability remains incomplete without referring to their study or works, which serve as reference – pillars of media accountability. Especially notable among them is the

report of Hutchins Commission which concluded in 1947: "the press plays an important role in the development and stability of modern society and, as such, it is imperative that a commitment of social responsibility be imposed on mass media." It emphasized that "the press has a moral obligation to consider the overall needs of society when making journalistic decisions in order to produce the greatest good." The Commission defined the social responsibility of modern media in a democracy.

Hodges (1986) was more interested in defining what the media should be responsible for. He opined "we cannot reasonably demand that the press give an account of itself or improve its performance until we determine what it is the press is responsible for doing."

Pritchard explained, in 1991 and reiterated in 2000, press accountability as a process by which press organizations may be expected or obliged to render an account to their constituents. A constituent, to the scholar, could be an individual, group, or organization, whose goodwill is important for any media organization. Moreover, a media organization can have many constituents including audience members, advertisers, news sources, peers in other organizations and regulatory authorities.

In support of this definition, Plaisance (2000) observed that accountability is a manifestation of the interaction between the claims of one autonomous agent and the set of values of another. Further, these definitions discuss accountability of the press to news sources, readers and others, while the press is increasingly becoming accountable to the employer. Klaidman and Beauchamp sought to classify accountability in 1987 into three: accountability to employers, accountability to subjects and accountability to sources.

Plaisance (2000) came with some specific indicators: Responsibility is the obligation for proper custody, care and safekeeping of one's audience. More specifically, *social responsibility* entails the necessity for the journalist to keep society's interest as a top priority. This can also be seen as a collective responsibility or public interest responsibility. In the words of Plaisance (2000) "[w]hereas accountability often is referred to as the manifestation of claims to responsibility, the latter is the acknowledged obligation for action or behavior within frameworks of roles and morals."

McQuail (2003), a notable mass communication scholar, defined media accountability as "voluntary or involuntary processes by which the media answer

directly or indirectly to their society for the quality and/or consequences of publication." He wrote in 2003 "accountable communication exists where authors (originators or sources or gatekeepers) take responsibility for the quality and consequences of the publication, orient themselves to audiences and others affected and respond to their expectations and those of the wider society."

Having mapped the field of media accountability research in *Mapping Media Accountability – in Europe and Beyond*, researchers define media accountability instruments as *any informal institution, both offline and online, performed by both media professionals and media users, which intends to monitor, comment on and criticize journalism and seeks to expose and debate problems of journalism.*⁵

The aim of media accountability is to:⁶

- "improve the services of the media to the public;
- restore the prestige of media in the eyes of the population;
- diversely protect freedom of speech and press;
- obtain, for the profession, the autonomy that it needs to play its part in the expansion of democracy and the betterment of the fate of mankind."

Others take accountability in negative tone and refer to it as another word for culpability. They explain accountability as closely related to doing something wrong. To them, the issue of accountability crops up only when some wrong acts appear in public or irregularities are unearthed. Accountability is rarely mentioned in times, when none senses wrong.

A peep at the eastern philosophy would reveal the importance of one's duty – duty to self, duty to family, duty to community, duty to professional institutions, duty to nation, duty to mankind and duty to universe (ecology). Oriental philosophers and preachers have long urged people to be true to words, pledge and always remain actively action-bound. They have warned against evil consequences of breaking one's pledge. At the same time, they speak highly of the practice of accepting responsibility, which, to them, is an uplifting task that cleans and helps build trust. "To forgive is divine" is much more than a saying for it reveals high spirit of making people regard responsibility as a serious theme. Media could derive inspiration from the eastern philosophy as well,

although this dimension is rarely used in the contemporary discussion on media accountability.

Challenges

How to work out tools of accountability, which could ensure both freedom of expression and social responsibility of media? How to maintain credibility of media and sustain trust among media and its users? These are the questions that surround media researchers and scholars as they take up the issue of accountability. Scholars like McQuail suggest two measures – answerability and liability – be used for ensuring accountability. The former is rather soft and democratic and intends to promote media accountability through making people understand their duty spontaneously and motivating them to be accountable. It emphasizes dialogue among media producers and users in an extensive form urging both to listen to each other and consider each other's interest carefully.

The latter pursues legislative measures, laws to penalize those who fail to be accountable. It intends to prevent the situation of not taking responsibility by making people fear the laws and their ultimate consequences. Liability is a measure to make media pay for failing to be accountable. The measure could be effective in ensuring right of reply, protection of human rights, privacy, protection from libel and terrorism. Various components, such as professional creativity, innovative approach to media quality improvement in content and style, and high values of open frank communication between media and users may be discouraged by liability.

Way Forward

The concept of liability is more compatible with regulation, control and punishment, which by nature, hinder freedom of expression. It motivates state indirectly to be more active in implementing liability measures. It could also be instrumental in inspiring state intervention – direct or indirect – in media and motivating self-censorship on the part of individual journalists and media institutions. It discourages competition.

Answerability includes a sense of responsiveness, besides demanding dialogue at voluntary level, debate and open discussion. It expects media persons and news organizations to be ready for listening to stakeholders and accepting criticism from users and others. Answerability also seeks the public attention

⁵ Verlag (2011:20).

⁶ *Ibid.*

and cooperation to broader issues of media quality and standards. Scrutiny instruments such as codes of ethics, press council, ombudsmen, public hearing, social auditing, media critique, media-academia dialogue and other correction measures could be used for ensuring answerability.

A few scholars have in recent times emphasized the need to pay priority attention to media accountability. In view of the growing multi-media use and expanding social media, the theme of accountability occupies central space in media practice and discourse. Media literate citizenry of modern times could by themselves serve as pressure group to compel media to be accountable for what they do.

In the context of Nepal, special efforts should be first made for defining media accountability from the perspectives of various types of media persons such as reporters, editors, owners, designers, publishers, photographers, technicians and varied kinds of media institutions. There should be provision for overall responsibility and the specific responsibility of each one operating under the umbrella of media. Moreover, the

issue of collective responsibility or team responsibility and individual responsibility should also be precisely spelt out. Having completed that task, an exercise of combining two components of media accountability — answerability and liability — should be worked out for the print, radio, TV, online and social media. Once this is done, a structure of disciplining media with due respect for freedom of expression and editorial freedom could be built up. Will media workers and their stakeholders take care in doing that?

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Development as Communication Goal

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Abstract

The idea to explore and exploit all possibilities of human communication for the sake of economic development gave birth to the concept of development communication. In the course of time, the development communication as an exertion to agricultural extension, paved the way for development journalism, a novel and appropriate approach for the journalism across the developing countries. Contemporary understanding is that both interpersonal communication, including small group communication, and mediated communication through the mass media need to be harnessed in order to create conducive atmosphere for the development communication. Development journalism today is known as a grass-root approach in journalism that tries to enable and empower ordinary people. When communication was designed to obtain development goal, it was named development communication, and today journalism that is oriented to support in achieving overall condition of human development is considered as development journalism. Development journalism, thus, is a right-based approach within the profession of journalism.

Keywords: applied communication, communication, development, development discourse, unfreedom.

Background

This write-up tries to explore evolutionary aspect of the development communication and development journalism as its major area. The essay relies on secondary sources and qualitative approaches such as class room discussions and group discussion with the working journalists in various occasions over one and half decade.

The general objective of the essay is to discuss the principle and practice of the development communication and development journalism. It has two specific objectives. First, it tries to show that communication approaches to development efforts have different variants. Second, it tries to explain the contemporary understanding of development journalism has been modified in line with right-based approach.

The Context: Development as Respectable News Beat

Development communication was reincarnated with an attempt to give voice for the voice less. As Sainath (1996:xiii) figures 90 per cent of the Indian population who are beyond the margins of a press and media and they are deprived of communication, traditional mainstream media are being indulged in "love with a

good drought". This is a common phenomenon around the developing world. Disasters and all kinds of bad news are being considered as marketable news. However, the efforts to redefine development communication and development journalism have brought the change over the years. Nora Quebral (2011)¹ has rightly mentioned that by the late 1990s, development communication was no longer suspect in Asia as being a lapdog of government. She argues that development has become a respectable news beat.

Definitions of development over the years have been undergone through the slippery slope. However, either development communication or development journalism — both the concepts consider development as a communication goal. With the departure from the narrower definition of development, the mode of development communication and development journalism have also been redesigned.

Pieterse (2010:7) states that with human development in the mid-1980s came the understanding of development as capacitation, following Amartya Sen's work on capacities and entitlements. He explains that

¹Lecture delivered at the Honorary Doctorate Celebration Seminar, LSE, University of London, December 2011. Accessed from <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/events/pdf/Professor%20Nora%20Cruz%20Quebral%20Dec%202011%20lecture.pdf>.

in Sen's view the point of development, above all, is that it is enabling (p. 7). Sen (2010:3) himself argues that focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance, or with social modernization. He states that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states (p. 3-4).

Quberal (2012:4) shares similar view as she states that the take-off point is a certain degree of economic independence for both individuals and countries. She further says that it has to be accompanied by social, political and moral development as well.

Often, the term development communication and development journalism have been used as synonymous to each other. Narula (2002:19) describes development communication as "the systematic use of communication in support of national development." Using the terms development communication and development journalism with almost similar meaning, she further says, "The individuals who conceived development communication/journalism in 1960s believed that there should be better trained and informed economic specialists among the communicators, since national development depends on economic growth; to cover fully, impartially and simply the myriad problems of developing nations." Contrary to what Narula says, Sharma (2007:22) explains, "Development journalism is sometimes confused with development communication." He adds, "These are, however, two different concepts and have different origins." Thus these two terms are not synonymous. Nevertheless both should go hand in hand in order to achieve development goals. As in Quebral's (2012:4) view-point communication is the vehicle that carries development onward, both development communication and development journalism show pathways for the progressive change in society.

Communication and Journalism for Development

Development communication and development journalism can be differentiated in two dimensions. First, communication is an umbrella concept and

journalism comes under that overarching umbrella. Thus, development journalism exists within the overshadowing umbrella of development communication. In the second dimension, development communication and development journalism are different in terms of their origins and practice.

Kharel (2007:4) states, "Communication can be committed to a two-way or multi-way process." Thus, it comprises interpersonal communication as well as mass communication. "Should the text then be disseminated, via mass media, to an audience wider than the original participants, then the process is more accurately described as mass communication (Franklin et.al. 2005:41)." Since the journalistic products are disseminated among the wide range of mass audience, journalism is a form of mass communication.

Narula (2002:19) states that one of the forms of applied communication is development communication through mass media and interpersonal communication channels to focus on development practices and programmes. According to her (p. 19), journalism through print and broadcasting media is another form of applied communication. Communication goes beyond applied communication. Different types of applied communications are the branches of communication.

Development communication grew out of the field of agricultural communication (Narula, 2002:18). It was initiated as an effort to extend diffusion of innovations and best practices in the field of agriculture. Narula (p. 19) states that development communication is described as the systematic use of communication in support of national development. As mentioned earlier, journalism is specific form of applied communication and development journalism is also a kind of applied communication.

Unlike development journalism, Sharma (2007) says, "Development communication has been defined as the application of communication technologies and processes for social change or development of society." He adds, "It can be carried out through a variety of ways-interpersonal communication, theater, and mass communication tools such as radio and television" (p. 22). According to him, this concept developed in the West in the 1940s, when scholars and academics postulated that development communication could be used as a tool to bring about change and development in newly independent countries, which were poor and underdeveloped.

Sharma says, "Development communication techniques have been primarily applied in developing countries to reach people with messages regarding new agricultural varieties, contraception, health and hygiene, and the like." (p. 22). He concludes, "As such, development communication was an extension of the concept and practice of agricultural extension." (p. 22). Thus, development communication is older than development journalism.

In a bid to shed light on the initiation of development journalism, Sharma describes, "While development communication as a discipline was taking shape in agricultural universities, similar thinking emerged among practitioners of journalism, which led to the birth of development journalism in the 1960s" (p. 24) and traces the origin of the term "development journalism" or "development reporting" back to 1964. Stressing social responsibility of mass media, development journalism was initiated by the journalists from the developing world. Loo (2009:10) states that historically, development journalism is derived from development communication. According to him, this was a practice pioneered by extension agricultural workers in India and the Philippines, whose job was to disseminate information on new agricultural methods to farmers during a period of broad agrarian reforms during 1970s.

An idea to sensitizing Asian reporters to the process and then attempt to look for a news beat, which focused on the economic and social changes taking place in Asia ultimately led to the development of a unique news feature service in 1968. It provides model stories for the region's press (Sharma, 2007:26). Sharma (2007:26) states that it was named Development Economic and Population Themes News, or DEPTH news for short. The exercise was called development journalism.

Kunczik (1995:85) says that the term development journalism as such was coined and introduced to international discussion at the Philippine University of Los Banos. He further states, "Attention to it [development journalism] was given a particular boost after the Press Foundation of Asia was founded in 1967." According to him (p. 85), in the early 1970s the DEPTH-news agency served as a training device for development journalism. The trend continued and today development journalism is an established branch of journalism.

Kunczik (1995:23) presents a view that reads, "Development communication is understood as the

communication strategy related to an entire society, respectively a comprehensive national development plan." Whereas, he argues, development journalism is synonymous with a grass roots approach in the field of practicing journalism, it is "primarily local journalism in the sense that the journalist should be rooted in the local culture concerned." (p. 24). Development journalism is being prevailed through small community media in country-sides of third world.

Current Understanding of Development Journalism

Djokotoe (2013:2) mentions that development stories are big news in developing countries. However, he sees the problem that, (in various parts of the world), most of the media reports were typically just government announcements of infrastructure development — roads, bridges, hospitals, etc. — and official claims that lives will improve. Those articles turn off the reading and viewing public, and that has some editors pulling their staffs off this important coverage.

Here, Djokotoe (2013:3-9) stresses on less jargon and more people, impact and original reporting. He reminds that a journalist needs to write for ordinary people — not development experts—to show them the implications of the events unfolding around them. According to him such approach leads a journalist to creative, rich stories full of information and knowledge. Djokotoe's ten-point advice is based on the experiences from Africa, specifically from Malawi. He suggests broadening the development stories beyond an event. He stresses to humanize such development stories. His idea is to focus on ordinary people, not on big shots. At the same time he suggests to look for unusual angles in order to attract the audience. He stresses on the field work and says report from the field is must. His idea is to use news events to explain issues. He stands for simple and comprehensive writing. Thus, he says, avoid technical jargon. He is cautious on misuse and carelessness of statistics. He suggests fellow journalists to come up with follow up stories. He points out the necessity of study of relevant documents and states the every journalist should read widely.

Loo (2009:13) cites Johan Galtung and Richard C. Vincent (1992) to discuss the necessity of a reorientation of conventional journalistic principles in order to foster development journalism. They propose such requirements in their seminal works *Global Glasnost: Toward a New World Information and*

Communication Order? Galtung and Vincent views that whenever there is a reference to development, a journalist should try to make it concrete in terms of human experience. According to them journalists should write about people as subjects, actors and agents rather than as objects or victims with needs deficits.

Galtung and Vincent opines that development-oriented journalist would never forget the dimension of democracy. They state that the task of the media is to report what the system is doing. Democracy can only function when there is a free flow of information between people, the system and the media. They view that using the media to make people visible, both as objects and as subjects, becomes one task. Using it to expose the system through investigative reporting is the second. Using the media to expose media that fail to do their job, is the third.

They suggest journalists to consider the possibility of reporting about development, not critically in terms of problems, but constructively in terms of positive programmes. According to them success stories may contribute to a general sense of optimism that can generate more momentum for democracy and development. People in similar situations elsewhere can benefit from such success stories if the report is adequately concrete.

Galtung and Vincent stress that the people should be allowed to talk. This means giving them a voice. According to them a useful approach is for journalists to sit down with a range of people to discuss the meaning of development to generate an enormous range of visions as well as how-to insights.

Kunczik (1995:83) considers development communication as the all-encompassing term and quotes Rajasundaram (1981) as following, "The discipline and practice of communication in the context of developing countries." He (p. 84) also quotes the pioneer in the concept and teaching of development communication, Dr. Nora Quebral (2012:4) of the then University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture, to present a tauter definition of development communication as "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential." Then Kunczik (1995:84) comments on her statement with the following words, "This enjoins development communication as a whole,

not just the mass media, to pursue certain objectives." He adds, "Other forms of communication such as interpersonal communication, theater, storytelling or billboards must also be used as communication media." Kunczik, thus clearly mentions that the development journalism comes within the overarching umbrella of development communication. Development communication policy promotes practice of development journalism.

Schramm (1965) writes, "It may well be that mass communication (and the interpersonal communication we have learned to combine with it) are about to play a key part in the greatest social revolution of all time — the economic and social uplift of two-thirds of the world's people." (p. 91). Obviously, he was talking about varieties modes of communication that would be effective for the national development. Development communication aims to use various modes of communication that embraces development journalism in an effective manner.

Development communication is a notion that started with the initiation in the Western world. After *World War II* (1939 – 1945), when the US came forward with the third world version of Marshal Plan, communication was considered as an integral aspect or the infrastructure for development. "Concern for the plight of the people in the Third World countries moved US President Truman to propose the 1949 Point Four program, which was to be the Third World version of the Marshall Plan." (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:51). At the time development communication was a buzzword in development discourse.

Later, development journalism originated in Asia. It began with the realization that the journalists in the Third World have special roles and duties other than the journalists form the developed nations. In this context, Hester (1988: 6) says that the Third World reporter, just as other media professionals in developing countries, can never forget that the media are educators as well as bringers of information to an already educated public. People, the world over, look to their media to show them models for aspiring to a better life.

The phrase 'development journalism' was coined in Asia after the initiation of development discourse in the first development decade declared by the UN. "While development communication as a discipline was taking shape in agricultural universities, similar thinking emerged among practitioners of journalism, which led to the birth of development journalism in the

1960s." (Sharma, 2007:24). Development journalism emerged after the concept of development support communication. In the course of time, theory and practice of development journalism have been modified in order to give voice for the voiceless in real sense.

On several occasions, media, the medium of journalism, seem limited for the sake of disseminating development messages. Mody (1991:11) says, "I learned that media had actually been less powerful than expected." She further states that the mass media had provided information, but families, friends, and neighbors ultimately influenced the decisions people made and the actions they took. So for the sake of development support in several instances communication beyond journalism would be essential. That is the way scholars and practitioners talk about development communication.

Harnessing Direct and Mediated Communication

Development communication cannot be possible without the blend of interpersonal and mass communication. To disseminate development message among the people who are not exposed to the tools of journalism like television, radio, online or newspaper, we need different mode of communication. Thus, wider form of communication goes beyond journalism. Development support communication comprises various activities, right from door-to-door counseling on a particular issue, street drama and rallies. Development journalism comes under the development communication, whereas development communication may not necessarily come under development journalism. However, both development communication and development journalism are specialized way of communicating the people who need innovations to get rid of vicious cycle of deprivations.

Development communication and development journalism are the means of interaction between and

among three essential parameters for development, viz. political leadership, development administration and the rural and urban masses. Both pursue development as a major communication goal.

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Mediating *Dalit* Human Rights in Nepal: A Principled Stance for Media

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Abstract

Nepali Dalits have a population of 3.6 million as of March 2015. Their nominal presence, in decision-making processes over decades, reflects their extreme marginalization and exclusion. A mere superficial reporting of a few visible incidents does not create required pressures for stakeholders. There exists an utter lack of human rights perspectives in media coverage of Dalit human rights in Nepal. This article aims to discuss that a principled stance for Nepali media to mediate Dalit human rights is to base their coverage on the global human rights treaties, the domestic constitutional provisions and the social responsible theory of media. Dalits' civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights deserve an equitable space and attention of media for a just society.

Keywords: Nepal, *Dalits*, marginalized, human rights, media, freedom, equality, brotherhood

Human Rights Concept: A Brief Sketch

Various factors have apparently contributed to the evolution of the modern concept of human rights. Some of them include: religious precepts, philosophical writings and discourses, customary social practices, war treaties of various times, classical historical documents, contribution of the League of Nations, and more.

However, the modern concept of human rights emerged with their linkage with political and independence struggles. Some major contributions with universalistic approaches, for instance, came from the British *Magna Carta* (1215), the *American Declaration of Independence* (1776), the *French Revolution* (1789) and the *Russian Bolshevik Revolution* (1917).

The *Magna Carta*,¹ declared 800 years ago in England, informs us that King John (1199-1216) was compelled to sign in the paper for people's liberties in the feudal era (Gosine, 2011). Similarly, the *American Declaration of Independence* (1776)² states that all human beings are born equal and deserve their natural rights without discriminations. Moreover, *The Declaration of the*

Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789),³ produced as the outcome of the French Revolution in 1789, molded global principles of 'equality', 'freedom' and 'brotherhood', also reflected in the *UN Charter* (1945)⁴ and in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and other subsequent human rights treaties and other related documents. To add to it, the Bolshevik Revolution laid emphasis on the equal recognition of economic and social rights compared to civil and political rights (Yasin and Upadhyay, 2004). These declarations of rights set important precedents towards modernizing the concept of human rights.

Human rights seem to have become a global concern especially after the *World War II* (1939 – 1945). Lyons and Mayall (2003) believe that the Nazis' arrogant claim of being a superior race and the deep fears that they engendered throughout the countries occupied by them created widespread support for raising human rights to a new level of international concern.

Later, the establishment of the UN and its mechanisms has officially universalized human rights across the globe. The UN Charter, in its Preamble, expresses all the member nations' commitment towards global peace and security, fundamental human rights, dignity

¹ Retrieved from <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/poldocs/magnacar.pdf>

² www.constitution.org/us_doi

³ Retrieved from http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/2011_build/human_rights/french_dec_rights_of_man.authcheckdam.pdf

⁴ For the full text of the charter, see: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

and worth of the human person, the equal rights of men and women, and economic and social advancement of all peoples.

On 10 December 1948, the then 58 member-states of the United Nations, through the General Assembly, adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*⁵ with the foundational principle in its Article 1 that states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This Article has clearly adopted the pivotal principles of *freedom, equality and brotherhood* stated in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* declared after the French Revolution in 1789. The UDHR Preamble states that recognition of the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all individuals is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It attaches equal importance to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and all human beings' entitlement to them without discrimination on any ground.

All human rights stated in the Declaration are naturally relevant for media. However, Article 19 has special importance for media institutions and journalists. It states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Journalists all over the world often quote this Article whenever they advocate media freedom. So do Nepali journalists.

Assessing the possible impact of this important Universal Declaration on the scope of actions among nations, Donnelly states:

The Universal Declaration model envisions individuals deeply enmeshed in "natural" and voluntary groups ranging from families through the state. Internationally recognized human rights impose obligations on the state, regulate relations between citizens and states, and require the state and society for their realization (Mayall, 2003:21).

Donnelly classifies mainly the four elements of the Universal Declaration model, worth emphasizing in his view (ibid, p. 20). These include: focus on rights; the restriction to individual rights; the balance between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights; and national responsibility for implementing internationally recognized human rights.

⁵ For the full text, see: <http://www.un.org/rights/HRToday/declar.htm>

Thus, relying on the rich philosophical insight of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international consensus on it, the UN General Assembly adopted two major human rights treaties, viz., and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*⁶ and *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*⁷ in 1966. These treaties are binding to all nations on Earth. Together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these treaties are recognized as International Bill of Rights. Numerous ingredients for media coverage on Dalit human rights exist in those treaties.

Likewise, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)*⁸ adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 1965 has had its basis in the UDHR, the ICESCR and ICCPR. According to CERD, the State has the obligation not to discriminate its peoples of various races, ethnic backgrounds or descents, and punish those who discriminate on any ground. Required to take proactive measures for the elimination of racial discrimination of all forms, the state has to guarantee equal civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights to the peoples of all origins.

Dalit Human Rights in Nepal

What is Caste? Who are Dalits?

According to Louis Dumont (1970), the word 'caste' has the Portuguese and Spanish origin: *casta*, a word the Spaniards used in the sense of race, and which the Portuguese are said to have used in the Indian context in the middle 15th century. The word 'Dalit' is a political term that has been used to refer to the peoples who have been discriminated against and suppressed in various spheres of their lives on the basis of their so-called lowest position in the caste hierarchy. The literal meaning of the word generally found in contemporary English dictionaries is 'downtrodden'.

"The *Brāhmaṇ* was his (*Puruṣa*'s) mouth; the *Rājanya* was made his arms; the being (called) the *Vaiśyas*, he was his thighs; the *Śūdra* sprang from his feet." Dutt (1986) refers to this *Rgvedic* hymn as the *Magna Carta* of the caste system.

⁶ For the full text, see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/escr.htm>

⁷ For the full text, see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cpr.htm>

⁸ See the full text at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

Upadhyay (2005) refers to caste strata as the origin of the Hindu *varṇāśrama* system rooted in the *Rgveda*. The Sanskrit word "*varṇāśrama*" literally means color or light as per the *Rgveda*. Upadhyay states, "However, the *varṇa* and caste have also been considered synonyms. In the *Taitīrīya Brāhmaṇa*, the Brahmins and the *Śūdras* have been described as *Daivī varṇa* and *āsurya varṇa* respectively. The formal literally means the divine color while the latter means the demonic color. "But the *Gītā* (another sacred Hindu treatise)," Upadhyay further states, "considers actions as the major criteria for the determination of the Varna. It mentions that those who do good get born as the noble Varna while those who do ill-deed get born as the ignoble Varna." Many laypersons, perhaps misunderstanding this saying, happen to be rigid believers that caste is the product of yesterday's *karma* (deed) and so one has to accept it the way it is.

It has apparently been a hereditary social system that has been transformed little in substance, while crystallizing *Dalit* human rights. Referring to the four *varṇa*-based deep-rooted caste hierarchy, India's constitutional architect and *Dalit* leader B. R. Ambedkar states, "That the principle of graded inequality is a fundamental principle is beyond controversy. The four classes are not on horizontal plane, different but equal. They are on vertical plane. Not only different but unequal in status, one standing above the other."

Linking *Dalits*' suffering to this deep-rooted tradition, *Nepal National Dalit Welfare Organization* (NNDSWO)⁹ writes, "*Dalits* in Nepal are a historically state-victimized disadvantaged community who have been compelled to lag at the bottom of the social structure and excluded from national development mainstream due to the caste system and extreme Hinduism for centuries."

Nepal Government's 2011 Census shows a total population of 26,494,504 out of which *Dalit* population is more than 3.4 million (about 13%). National *Dalit* Commission¹⁰ has enlisted 26 castes under the *Dalit* community, categorizing them into the Hill *Dalits* and the Terai *Dalits*.

Dalits and State in Nepal

Amidst all-pervasive caste-based discriminations in direct and subtle forms, defining caste-based discrimination may be a challenging job. However,

International Labor Office, Kathmandu (2005) describes caste-based discrimination as "the use of power by a superordinate group to impose customary or legal restrictions and deprivations upon a subordinate group in order to maintain a situation of privilege and inequality." Referring to discrimination as the result of a prejudiced state of mind, possible in various spheres of human activity, its Series 5 of the report adds, "It may involve enforced residential segregation, differential access to educational or employment opportunities, discrimination at the workplace, and imposition of other customary and legal disabilities."

This *varṇāśrama*¹¹ system was believed to have been initiated in Nepal following the entry of the Aryans from the South (Upadhyay, 2005). The first Aryans to enter Nepal were the *Licchavis* as early as c.a. 4th century AD. The *Nāgas*, *Gopālas* (the cow-herds), *Mahiṣapālas* (the buffalo-herds), *Kirāts* — the ones before the *Licchavis* before c.a. 1st century AD — were non-Aryans, Upadhyay adds. With a Hindu-Aryan mentality, the *Licchavis* naturally, as per their belief, emphasized on following the Aryan *varṇāśrama* norms and values to maintain society. *Licchavi* King *Amśuvarmā* (605 – 621 AD) had announced that his palace would directly look into the cases of Varna system violations. The *Licchavi* King *Siva Dev II* (694 – 705 AD) even set up a separate office called *Bhaṭṭādhikaran* to oversee people's conduct in relation to the Hindu religion and the *varṇa* system.

King *Jayasthiti Malla* (1382 – 1395 AD) of medieval Nepal reinforced the loosening caste system by classifying the people as per the Hindu *varṇa* system under which he clearly imposed many restrictions against the *Dalits*, who required to serve all the other castes, without ever seeking equality and dignity — a notion tantamount to a crime in that era. (Budhathoki, 1982). They were not allowed to wear clothes of their choices. Nor were they allowed to have house roofs similar to the ones of so-called higher-caste people.

In other parts of Nepal too, kings made sure caste system was followed, expanded and strengthened. For instance, King *Prithvī Malla of Karṇālī* (1138 – 1360 AD) did this in the Western Nepal (Chandara, 2004). Similarly, *Karṇāt* State within *Mithilā* Region (1097 – 1325 AD) imposed a caste registration system, expanding it towards eastern Nepal. Between 1609 and

⁹ Retrieved from <http://www.nndsw.org.np/index.php?page=workingareas>

¹⁰ Retrieved from <http://ndc.gov.np/site/cms/4>

¹¹ A hierarchical system with tiers, one above the other, and is traced back to the *Rgveda*.

1636 AD, King *Rām Shāh* of *Gorkhā* strongly applied the caste system (ibid).

The first *Rānā* Prime Minister *Jung Bahādur* made a law in which he made caste-based discriminations compulsory, with punishment measures against those who did not follow these discriminations (Hofer, 2004; Chandara, 2004). All historical texts of Nepal prove that the 104-year *Rānā* regime was strict and totalitarian in all respects. Although some priestly advisers, their relatives and those who worked in the *Rānā* palaces enjoyed certain privileges, including the privilege to have ownership of much land, most of the ordinary people were not given most of their fundamental rights. As even the majority of non-*Dalits* were suppressed heavily, there was no question of *Dalits* having rights in that era of hereditary *Rānā* rule.

After the fall of the *Rānā* regime in 1951, the official policy of caste discrimination was not abolished immediately. The 104-year *Rānā* rule had left deeper impressions in the Nepali psychology from which the new democratic forces such as the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal, which struggled against the hereditary rule, were not free considerably. On the one hand, the fall of the *Rānā* regime due to people's armed struggles meant that the power went back to the Shah dynasty, and on the other, the new forces seeking changes themselves were not mature enough to analyze such issues as they began to encounter each other as the chief antagonists. However delayed it was, King Mahendra replaced the 1854 *Muluki Ain* in 1963 (Kansakar and Ghimire, 2008). For the first time in Nepal, the State admitted to the truth that caste-based discrimination was not legally valid, and that it was necessary to invalidate the caste-based discriminations legally imposed by the *Rānās*. Despite this ban on caste-based discriminations, there were no other legal provisions to eliminate these age-old practices. In a sense, it was a preliminary acknowledgement by the state that it was de jure wrong to discriminate people on the ground of caste, though *Dalits* were de facto discriminated as before.

Political and Socio-Economic Conditions of *Dalits* in Nepal

Despite *Dalits*' struggle to improve their situation, it is not easy as they have a lack of representation in and access to politics, civil service and professions (UNDP, 2008)¹². They are rather discouraged than motivated;

as a result, their struggles for better often prove ineffective. This calculation by the UNDP indicates how seriously the *Dalits* of Nepal suffer from non-representation in politics and other vital sectors.

By all kinds of available poverty-defining parameters, *Dalits* have been found the poorest community in Nepal and more than 40% *Dalits* across the country are landless.¹³ In Nepali understanding, *Dalits* are traditionally so-called lower caste people treated as "untouchable" facing political, economic and social discriminations due to which 90% percent of them are below the poverty line, and most of them are landless.¹⁴

As Nepal's *Dalits* are the most marginalized community, Nepal's national development continuously gets affected due to the marginalization of more than 3.4 million *Dalits*. The country's National Planning Commission, poverty alleviation programs and even international agencies such as the World Bank and the UNDP have not studied the overall impact of *Dalits*' extreme marginalization on Nepal's overall productivity.

Commenting on the Nepali *Dalits*' human rights conditions in Nepal, the Human Rights Watch World Report 2011 states, "*Dalits* ('untouchables') suffer from discrimination in economic, social, and cultural spheres". The report notes that Nepal has yet to implement the UN agreed-upon guidelines on the elimination of caste discrimination.

The *UNDP Human Development Index 2014* ranks Nepali *Dalits* at 0.434, which implies that they belong to the absolute poverty line or the lowest socio-economic strata in Nepal. The *Dalit* community's per capita income is NRs. 33,786 per annum, the report states.

The report adds, "Low levels of education as well as social and economic exclusion translate into limited opportunities in economic and political spheres." Socially inclusive policies in education and health, and social protection for vulnerable groups have been recommended in the UNDP report, which stresses on the need for Nepal to accelerate its economic growth. Whatever the UNDP, a life-long development partner of Nepal, says, the formulation and implementation of inclusive pro-social justice policies are not very likely unless the political leaderships and official policymakers are able to internalize the human rights

¹² Retrieved from <http://www.ccd.org.np/publications/dalit%20of%20nepal%20and%20a%20new%20constitution.pdf>

¹³ As of footnote #9.

¹⁴ Helvetas Nepal Learning and Sharing Series No. 1

of the *Dalit* community, especially the sense of human dignity.

Literacy rate is also an indicator of the *Dalit* community. It ranges from 7.28 % (of *Musāhar*) to 46.86 % (*Gāine*).

A Nepali Civil Society parallel report on *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)*, with a review from April 2007 to July 2013,¹⁵ has recommended that the proportional representation of the marginalized and excluded peoples be included in the new constitution. The report also recommends that new legal and policy frameworks be designed to mainstream the marginalized and the excluded, including the *Dalit* community. This proves that the socio-economic and cultural rights of the *Dalit* community are still underheeded by the State.

Principled Stance for Media on *Dalit* Human Rights

Nepal, with a total area of 147,881 Sq. Km and a total population of 28,120,740 as of 3 March 2015, is very rich in the number of media. According to *Nepal Press Council's Annual Report 2014*, the total number of print media is 3,712, with the number of licensed FM stations being 543 of which 360 are operational. Similarly, number of licensed television stations is 75 while 116 online news portals have been recorded in the Press Council. This shows a quantitative swelling of media in Nepal. However, the direct observation of the existing public consciousness and the quality of information being produced and disseminated implies an immense need for the information and communication institutions and professionals to be up to the scratch. A positive possibility uniting the nation through diversity arises with the growing number of media should there be a wise and appropriate media policy in the country.

Indeed, mediating *Dalits'* suffering entails bridging pro-social justice exercises going on in various sectors and at different levels with state policymakers and enforcers. Media's exercises cover both self-sensitization and sensitization of others, with the spirit of human rights being central in their coverage. A deeper understanding of the deep-rooted character of one's own society gives them ground and strength to cover *Dalits'* human rights more justly.

The *Vienna Declaration of Human Rights*¹⁶ further clarifies that civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights are independent and interrelated, and media should treat them accordingly, linking them to Nepali *Dalits'* human rights.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* — all three combined, commonly known as the *International Bill of Human Rights* — provide strong foundations for media to rely on as far as their thematic areas of human rights coverage are concerned. The *Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)* signed on 21 November 2006 between the State and the then Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is an internationally recognized historical document that most relevantly states the agenda of political and socio-economic transformation and state restructuring to transform the conflicts in the Nepali society. These agenda clearly mean patchwork will not improve Nepal at all because there are deep-rooted multi-faceted discriminations and institutionalized structural inequalities in the vertically hierarchized society. In the light of these realities, *Dalit* rights are part of media coverage from human rights perspectives. Media themselves need to be courageous enough to transform their traditionally molded mindset while they try to substantiate their journalism to a higher level.

While the Nepali *Dalits*, too, aspire to be well-dignified democratic citizens in the 21st century, the Nepali media should seriously address the issue of state restructuring, as envisioned in the CPA, a potential tool also for transforming *Dalit* human rights conditions.

Similarly, the *Interim Constitution* Article 12 (1) under the Fundamental Rights Part in Nepal's Interim Constitution 2007 clearly states every person's right to live with human dignity. Similarly, Article 12 (1) includes the right to equality: All citizens shall be equal before the law. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws. Under Article 12 (2), the constitution guarantees that there will be no discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, color, sex, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these. Moreover Article 12 (3) further clarifies that the State shall not discriminate against citizens on grounds of religion,

¹⁵ Retrieved from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/NPL/INT_CESCR_NGO_NPL_15369E.pdf

¹⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx>

race, caste, tribe, sex, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these.

Regarding the practices of caste untouchability, the Interim Constitution has had a special provision in its Article 14, which describes the Right against untouchability and racial discrimination. It elaborates in 14 (1) that no person shall be discriminated against as untouchable and subjected to racial discrimination in any form, on grounds of caste, race, community or occupation. Such discriminatory treatment shall be punishable, and the victim shall be entitled to such compensation as determined by law.

In the *Interim Constitution*, Article 21, viz., the Right to Social Justice, is an attractive provision for the *Dalit* community. It assures the *Dalits* and other deprived communities about their inclusion and mainstreaming from the perspectives of social justice.

Sub-section (a) of Article 12 (3) contains freedom of opinion and expression while Article 27 has the provision of right to information, which states that every citizen shall have the right to demand or receive information on any matter of his or her interest or of public interest. Although these communication and information-related constitutional provisions are for every citizen, a weaker utilization of them has been commonly noticed. Media are, by principle, expected to utilize these media freedom provisions on behalf of the majority of people, with special care for the vulnerable masses such as the *Dalit* community. In fact, the meaning of constitutional rights that media use are never confined to their entrepreneurial or professional interests. The primary vision of these media freedoms are to empower people.

Furthermore, Nepal's *Code of Journalistic Ethics 2003* (amended in 2008),¹⁷ advanced and tempting from professional and theoretical perspectives, provides the highest priority to press freedom, human rights and editorial freedom. The rationale of protection and promotion of press freedom, as mentioned in the *Code of Journalistic Ethics* is linked to human rights and democracy. The fundamental values stipulated in the Journalistic Code of Ethics indicate a noble sense of journalistic practices, not limited to practicing journalism as a profession at home but to serve the purpose of universal democracy and human rights so as to contribute to global justice, peace, freedom and equality. The term 'humanitarianism' used in this *Code*

of *Ethics* implies that Nepali journalists can even communicate on international human rights issues without confining themselves to Nepal framework. Furthermore, the point of editorial freedom and accountability in the Journalistic Code of Conduct further empowers Nepali journalists morally and mentally. Despite some constraints before Nepali journalists, the ethical guidelines intended for them can be utilized considerably for proactive information dissemination on *Dalit* issues.

Linking the core spirit of the human rights treaties to the vision of overall empowerment and wellbeing of human beings, Cherribi (2011:48) points out the media values in this context:

Human rights as a rule that has to be respected creates spaces that are universally recognized, and in that sense we can say that human rights can be a strategy of the universalization of values, virtues, attitudes, and social standards. The media are both the guardian of these virtues and values and too often the victim of states that violate them.

In the Nepali society where discriminations are structurally strengthened and socially institutionalized, media coverage of *Dalit* human rights violations, though tough, has to be in tandem with the global human rights treaties and the constitution at home.

Because media are a social entity legally assigned to work for society, no one can ever deny the media theory of *Social Responsibility*, which guides them in their work. The report "*A Free and Responsible Press*" (also referred to as *Hutchins Commission Report*) produced by *The Commission on Freedom of the Press* in 1947 has become a foundational principle for continuing media's social responsibility debate. Today, debates on media development have reached a newer height, definitely marked by conflicts between public and corporate interests. The need to create a demopolized environment for a responsible and independent, ethically motivated and self-regulating press has been reflected in the Commission's report. Two special features mentioned in the report, which appear relevant for Nepali media institutions, are:

- (i) media institutions can be commercial but journalism must not be commercialized and
- (ii) media institutions should also try to discipline one another through public criticism.

The Nepali media sector, if imbued with a genuine sense of social responsibility theory, could determine a specialized area for comprehensive information

¹⁷ Retrieved from <http://www.presscouncilnepal.org/codeofconduct.php>

dissemination on *Dalit* issues, using a human rights perspective.

To Sum Up

Nepal, a nation pursuing the path of democracy, has been a party to the *International Bill of Human Rights*—the binding commitments. While the *Nepalis* are in the process of designing a new state structure, they have also expected to see the beginning of political, socio-economic and cultural transformation of their society. For this, especially the *Nepali Dalits*, extremely marginalized and excluded from the mainstream power channels, expect to establish their human dignity through a rapid process of visible improvement in their civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights. They might not have mastered elevated and democratic language to impactfully interpret the degree and intensity of their suffering and pain. But it is true that their suffering and pain have been voiced by many others at different times at various levels with some impact. Media are surely one of those stakeholders voicing *Dalit* suffering. What is equally true is the fact that the miserable political, social and economic conditions of the *Dalit* community have been officially, nationally and internationally documented. The *Nepali* media can and should do better as far as *Dalit* human rights are concerned. There are rich precepts to theoretically and practically guide them in covering *Dalit* human rights. Some of the major guiding principles in this context, apart from well-developed media theories, are abundantly contained in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, and other treaties.

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Community Radio: Concepts and Practices in Nepal

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Abstract

Radio broadcasting has proved an effective media in countries like Nepal, where majority of people are illiterate, economically poor and live in remote areas. Radio broadcasting is still the only means of mass communication for many to get information, entertainment and education. In this context, the invention of FM technology has brought revolution in the field of radio broadcasting. Furthermore, the emergence of the concept of community radio broadcasting has provided an immense opportunity for community people to own radio broadcasting, gain participation in news and program-production and independently run radio stations for the welfare of their community. But, this research has found the situation of community radio broadcasting in Nepal is not as optimistic, as many community radio stations either lack the competencies to run radio stations under this concept or they have an obligation to make money for survival instead of adopting non-profit motive of community radio. This article also tries to distinguish community radio and commercial radio, that is often seen intermingled with each other.

Keywords: Community, commercial, FM radio, radio broadcasting, license, transmitter, radio programme

The first FM station in Nepal was *FM Kathmandu*, which went on air in 16 November 1994. The frequency was provided to the state-run *Radio Nepal* with programming provided by private broadcasters who leased blocks of time. *Radio Nepal* applied for and received a FM license for *FM Kathmandu* in December 1994, after the service had already begun broadcasting.

Nepal adopted private radio in 1997. It was the beginning of community FM radio in the country as well. *Radio Sagarmatha* is the first independent community radio station, not only of Nepal but of South Asia. There was already *Kothmale Radio* as the community station in Sri Lanka, but was owned by the government. *Radio Sagarmatha* is established by an NGO called Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) in May 1997.

After the third successive movement¹ for democracy in 2006 May, the door has been opened to the private radio. Social change and social justice is the motto of community radio stations. They have played pivotal role to restore democracy and change Nepal as the republic country from the kingdom. Rule of law, gender

equality, education, health, civic education, anti-corruption, good governance, environment and day-to-day problem and issues are being treated in different format by the local community radio stations. Community radios have a good coverage in all over Nepal. News is one of the very popular program formats of Nepalese community radio stations.

Before May 2006 political movement, there were only 56 licenses for FM radio broadcasting. Latest record of FM licensing according to Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) Nepal, up to September 2013, there are 594 licenses all over the country.² Finally *Manang* district also has got license³ after long time no license over there. Among 75 administrative districts, only *Manang* district was absent in radio license record. But it has not gone in operation up to March 2015. Only one district on the top of the Himalayan region of Nepal, *Manang* has no FM radio station up to this research. Among total licensing, 250 stations have got the membership⁴ of Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB), Nepal to those stations who have claimed themselves as Community Radio Stations up to March 2015.

¹ First was in 1951, which over thrown the *Rana* regime, second in 1990 which replaced party-less *Panchayat* system to multi-party political system and active monarchy to constitutional monarchy, and third one was in 2006 May which pave the way to Republic Nepal.

² Retrieved on 19 March 2015.

³ *Manang Sanchar Bikas Samaj* has got FM radio license of 100 Watts on 9 June 2014 (26 Jestha 2071).

⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.acorab.org.np/index.php?pagename=member> on 19 March 2015.

Nepal has no specific policy or law for licensing the community radio differently. The existing policy and law is equally applied for both community and commercial radio stations. In other words, the licensing process does not legally distinguish the community or commercial radio station. But the umbrella organization of community radio stations ACORAB Nepal has adopted certain standard in its statute in 2009 to categorize the stations to be considered as Community Radio. It includes:

1. Ownership: Private Company having owned the station would not be eligible to be a member.
2. Program content: There must be local contents in the program not less than 60 percent of overall contents.
3. Participation: People's participation in program production and ownership is necessary.

Community radio has different understanding having commonalities of people or community centric radio station. In Asia, TAMBULI Community Radio Project – Philippines (2001) consider it as:

Community radio means radio in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. There is a wide participation from regular community members with respect to management and production of programs. This involvement of community members distinguishes it from the dominant commercial media in the Philippines that are operated for PPPP – profit, propaganda, power, politics, privilege, etc. Serving the big P (people or public) is a token gesture mainly to justify existence in the government bureaucratic licensing procedures ... stations collectively operated by the community. Stations dedicated to development, education and people empowerment. Stations which adhere to the principles of democracy and participation.

Regarding the definition of community radio, it seems to adhere to the definition of democracy by late American President Abraham Lincoln by the people, to the people and for the people. As mentioned above, Philippines' definition as '*in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community*' is exactly similar to it. VOICES - India also has defined Community Radio in the same spirit:

Firstly, community radio is characterized by the active participation of the community in the process of creating news, information, entertainment and culturally relevant material, with an emphasis on local issues and concerns. With training, local producers can create programs using local voices. The community can also actively participate in the management of the station and have a say in the scheduling and content of the programs.

Secondly, it is essentially a non-profit enterprise. In these days of highly commercialized broadcasting, the ethos of community radio remains independence and a responsibility to serve the community, not the advertiser. As the station is owned by the community, it also maintains some responsibility in the running of the station.

Thirdly, community radio programming is designed by the community, to improve social conditions and the quality of its cultural life. The community itself decides what its priorities and needs are in terms of information provision.

In practice, not all community radios are conducted by the community to be a community radio. In Sri Lanka, *Kothmale FM* is one of community radio station operating under Sri-Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, a government entity. In Nepal also, *Madan Pokhara VDC of Palpa* district own *Radio Madan Pokhara*. Similarly, *Metro FM* is run by Kathmandu Metropolitan City. International Association for Community Radio (AMARC), an organization of world community radios has also paved the way to consolidate the radio station under its umbrella.

Sixth World Congress of Community Radio Broadcasters AMARC in Dakar, Senegal (January 1995) has defined community radio as:

Community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative, popular, educational radio. If the radio stations, networks and production groups that make up the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters refer to themselves by a variety of names, then their practices and profiles are even more varied. Some are musical, some militant and some mix music and militancy. They are located in isolated rural villages and in the heart of the largest cities in the world. Their signals may reach only a kilometer, cover a whole country or be carried via shortwave to other parts of the world.

Community radios have a significant coverage all over Nepal. FM radios are more popular than any other means of information and entertainment in Nepal. By its topographic condition, it is very difficult to circulate any newspaper or provide television service all over the country. People have less purchasing power to subscribe newspaper(s). Cable service is not easily available and accessible in rural areas and about 30 percent households have TV set. According to report of Central Bureau of Statistics 2011, about only 65 percent people have got electricity facility. Power-cut (or load-shedding) schedule hikes up to 18 hours a day in the dry season especially in March, April and May. Due to these reasons, FM radio is only an easy media to get information and entertainment in terms of their

economy as well as access and the facility. So FM stations are really popular among the rural population.

FM radio station is the popular tool to get information as well as entertainment. It is easily accessible in the rural part of the country and is being a part of life of the people. In other words, it is a powerful medium to persuade people in the rural parts of the country. If such a medium covers the issues of development, it has a great impact in the society. Are they covering the rural development issues or not? It has not been researched. So, this research has a relevancy.

Community radio is considered an appropriate medium in geographically and culturally diverse countries like Nepal. Community radio stations in Nepal are trying to break the tradition and open space for the marginalized people with greater access to information and opportunities to participate. Bruce Girard (1992:ix) has provided probably one of the best descriptions of community radio:

Community radio is a type of radio made to serve people; radio that encourages expression and participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices, to marginalized groups and to communities far from large urban centers, where the population is too small to attract commercial or large-scale radio station.

Lewis & Booth (1990:8) summarized the philosophical approach that distinguishes community radio from commercial and public service radio:

Community radio emphasizes that it is not commercial and does not share what it would call the prescriptive and paternalistic attitude of public-service broadcasting... The key difference is that while the commercial and public service models both treat listeners as objects, to be captured for advertisers or to be improved and informed, community radio aspires to treat its listeners as subjects and participants.

Community vs. Commercial radio

FM stations are considered as the community radio all over the world. But adopting the news like in AM stations, it has transformed into the commercial radio in most of the countries. As stated above, some developed countries abandoned AM stations and converted into FM transmissions, because of high audio quality, receptivity and public access to technology as well.

In Nepali context, there is neither community nor commercial FM stations by legal provisions. Since, there is no legal provision of commercial or community licensing, so the owners and operators have declared

themselves of being community or commercial stations. Government has provided the license of 10 kilowatt (KW) capacity to *Kantipur FM* in 1998 (2054 BS). India has given the license of up to 30 KW, as it has plain land and can cover a large area by one station. But, in other Asian context, Indonesia has many licenses but the capacity of up to 500 watts. With such rare exception, no practice of such a high capacity of frequency modulation is found in international practices.

Generally, community and commercial radio is classified according to its ownership, participation of community as well as of audience in program production and policy making and the technical capacity of the radio (Guragain, 2005:30-31). He explains:

Technically low capacity transmitter and involvement of community in program production, policy making and ownership are the characteristics of community radio...Community radio emphasize on easy and less expensive technology...but community radio are of 50 watts to 1000 watts whereas there are 100 and 250 watts commercial radio.

Community radio has no specific definition as different models are operating in the world. Differentiating community radio with other radio stations, some of the scholars have pointed out (Poudyal, 2002:12):

- Priority is given in participation of local community and the audience in station operation, management and policy declaration.
- Volunteers are also involved in program production.
- Programs are targeted to the local communities or the groups.
- Programs are focused on local language, literature, art and cultures as well as issues of local concerns are covered.
- Local sources are used for information and knowledge.
- Non-profit motive of the station.

Not following each and every points, but most of the community radio stations have gone through these principles in Nepal's context as well.

Concept of Community Radio

Community radio is a type of radio service, which offers a third model of radio broadcasting beyond commercial broadcasting and public broadcasting. UNESCO⁵ defines Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is broadcasting made,

⁵ Retrieved from www.unesco.org/public-service-broadcasting on 25 November 2013.

financed and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state-owned and both free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces. Community stations can serve geographic communities and communities of interest. They broadcast content popular and relevant to a local/specific audience, but which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters.

Community radio stations are operated, owned, and driven by the communities they serve. Community radio is not-for-profit and provides a mechanism for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own diverse stories, to share experiences, and in a media rich world, to become active creators and contributors of media.

In many parts of the world, community radio acts as a vehicle for the community and voluntary sector, civil society, agencies, NGOs and citizens to work in partnership to further community broadcasting aims. There is a clear legal definition of community radio as a distinct broadcasting sector in many countries such as France, Argentina, South Africa, Australia and Ireland. Much of the legislation has included phrases such as social benefit, social objectives, and social gain as part of the definition.

Community Radio in Practice

Community radio is defined differently by different scholars. Some look at it on the basic characteristics and nature of control and guidance. According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (2003), the three major elements of community radio are:

1. Non-Profit Making
2. Community Ownership and Control
3. Community Participation

W. Jayaweera (2007) has added:

Community radio is about social skills, business skills, creativity, IT skills, local democracy, hard to reach groups, involvement of women and young people and involvement of hundreds of volunteers. Community Radio is about harnessing the tremendous potentials media can offer to engage people and change their lives. It is about ordinary people having a stake in the vast broadcasting landscape and becoming responsible and accountable citizens. Community radio is also about media literacy. A media literate society can demand accountability from the media, and what better way to become media literate than by making media oneself?

Community radio has many names and operates with different objectives. Some community radio stations are oppositional broadcasters — anti-establishment activists working at the local level. Other stations are run by people without a particular political agenda in order to serve people with a humanitarian and grassroots development motive.

And, there are radio stations that serve local minority language populations. Because community radio has emerged from many origins, different terminology has been used: popular or educational radio in Latin America; rural radio or bush radio in Africa; free radio in parts of Europe; low-power radio in the United States; and ethnic or aboriginal radio in Australia.

In Nepal's context, there are some religious stations, and some others are ethnic and *Dalit*. *Radio Jagaran* at *Butwal* is the example of *Dalit* community radio operated by *Jagaran Media Center*, an NGO of *Dalit* media people. Another radio at *Butwal* called *Radio Samabesi* is an ethnic station. *Grace FM* at *Dhulikhel* provides programs on Christianity, whereas *Radio Adhyatmajyoti* has majority content on Hinduism. There might be differences in terms of its operations, but all such radio stations have one thing in common — they serve their communities in various capacities.

Michel Delorme, president of AMARC, argued that "all these names describe the same phenomenon: that of giving a voice and democratizing communication on a community scale" (Girard, 1992:ix).

Conventionally, communities are identified with a limited geographical region. It could be a neighborhood, village, and town or, in some cases, a city. The concept of community determined by geography is often contrasted with 'communities of interest,' where members share some cultural, social, or political interests independent of geographical proximity. The development of the Internet and the world-wide web has added a new dimension to the concept of community by allowing so-called "virtual communities" (Jankowski, 2002:5-6).

Similarly, the MacBride report defined community as "an aggregation of groups which vary in social class, economic status, often in political or religious affiliation and also in outlook and opinion. Any community, large or small, is held together by a nexus of communications." (MacBride, 1980: 1150).

Community Radio and Community

Nepal's situation regarding the participatory approach of community radio is very similar to the African state Rwanda. The research made by Search for Common Ground⁶ states:

When reviewing community ownership, control, participation, and service, it is found low levels of community participation and, therefore, buy-in, which it maintains are the cornerstones of sustainability. None of the stations studied had employed democratic process to ensure community-led governance, and board members were neither community-elected nor representative. Similarly, there were low levels of community involvement in production. As well, few stations truly catered to local languages and all stations were reliant on outside programming for diversity. However, all stations did attempt to interact with their audiences via methods including SMS/text messaging, call-in shows, and announcements.

The stations surveyed attempted to be independent; however, they tended to flourish the political issues rather than rural development one. They also lacked the internal ethical or editorial guidelines to facilitate unbiased reporting on these sensitive issues, if they were to take them up. This can also be problematic because it leaves staff and volunteers to make difficult decisions about program content. The community broadcasters might consider getting their editorial guidelines or codes endorsed by the regulator in order to give these codes extra weight and maximize stations, resulting in protection from outside interference.

The findings of this study suggest that communities expect a service that is unique and tailored to meet their daily needs. What makes a community broadcaster worth sustaining is the fact that it addresses the specific needs of that specific community in a way that no other broadcaster does. Involving a diverse cross-section of community members in the production of programs and in the decisions taken by a station as much as possible is probably the only way of achieving community interest. This would encourage community broadcasters to provide their communities with a service that the community needs and values enough for community members to contribute from their own pockets towards the financial sustainability of their stations, rather than continuously relying on outside sources.

Community radio could be sustainable if the community citizens directly involve in its policy and program making. There is severe lacks in the involvement of community volunteer to make the station a community station. In some stations people are working as volunteer but they neither represent any community organization nor their self-motivation. They are volunteers, simply because they are not paid by the station due to its poor management. The station itself has not been approached the local or community people to participate in the program production. Feeling of community ownership in local level is very poor.

Most of the radio stations have increased their transmission time immediately or after sometimes of operation to compete with other local stations. Their competition is mostly on the similar programs rather than to create a new signpost of the station in the society. Generally, the radio tunes from 5 am till 11 pm, but there has not been fixed time allocated for skill development and/or employment generation related programs that could directly benefit the local audiences. These radio stations have given less time and very few programs focusing marginalized people.

Participation and involvement of the community people in the radio station either by ownership or by producing program is in questionable position. Involvement of community group or people in program production could not be found in this study. Major role of audience participation seems to provide information to that specific radio station and programs. Audiences provide more and more suggestions to the station to make the program for the community. But programs are not being changed according to the audiences' preference. Most of the program producers answered that change would take place 'according to the needs' of the station. Even feeling of ownership among the community members in any specific radio under this study is almost absent.

Majority of rural parts of the country are yet to have electrification. So FM stations are mostly located either in the urban center and the district headquarters. The transmissions could be reached somehow far from the station areas where the real audiences are located and live. They don't have the electricity to access TV service neither have television sets or cable service to receive satellite TV broadcasting. They are the real audience of FM radio as they can receive radio waves easily on a cheap FM band radio sets. But the programs on FM

⁶ Retrieved from http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org/index.cfm?lang=en&context_id=3&context=manuals on 12 December 2012.

broadcastings are not intended to bring changes in their lives according to their needs, wants or interests.

Reduction of poverty is the major agenda of MDGs and real problem of Nepali citizen. Unfortunately very few stations have program on poverty reduction. Sometimes the stations broadcast situation of poverty as a part of news or radio report about poor lives rather than the program provide information and opportunity and skill for them to get out of poverty.

It might be the reason that the owner of FM frequency is not considering the radio station as a public property. *National Broadcasting Act 1993* mentions in its preamble that "... to protect and promote the right to information of the citizen and by using broadcasting system to disseminate the economic, social and cultural activities to create ethnic, lingual, regional and religious equality, harmony and tranquility and aware them through national language ..." the broadcasting media is need of time. But the FM station owners have failed to recognize the spirit of the act as well as the need of the society. Political segment of information is so strong that each station is covering it in their almost every news bulletin but the needy issues of day to day life are forgotten.

Most of the community radios have neither short nor the long term plan and policy to run the station. In the management part of the station, they do not very clearly known why they are operating the station in the poor condition. In editorial part, they have no landmark programs to create the signpost of the station and mostly copying similar nature programs of other stations and saying that they are being more competitive with others. Creativity on program production is almost zero.

Conclusion

By principle, a community radio should conduct, run and operate by the community itself. Members of the community must involve from policy making to produce the programs in the community radio. They must know what they should do or not. This principle has been mentioned in many books, articles and papers, but the practical exercise has not been examined by any of the scholars in a systematic way.

Radio is very popular media among the people in developing and under developed countries. It has large audiences and in most of the part of the country, only one medium of easy access. They have no or very few alternatives. In such a situation, radio could be an effective medium to make aware the people about the development and be able to make them participate in a whole process of development. But the studies have not been found focus in such a way.

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Performance and Role of NIC in RTI Implementation in Nepal

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Abstract

National Information Commission (NIC) – a judicial body provisioned by the Right to Information Act, 2007 – is mandated to play active role for the effectively implementation of Right to Information (RTI) laws in Nepal. Internationally, the function of Information Commission is somehow similar to promote information seeking activities, to protect the people's right and establish the information culture in the nation. It has a judicial right to punish the public agencies refusing to provide information to the requesters in line with the Act. It also acts as a campaigner in leveraging the demand and supply-side to demand and flow of information. Nepal has made some success stories with the NIC's proactive role and the cases have been established as precedents in the emergence and evolution of RTI regime in Nepal. The RTI Act in Nepal came as a result of democratic movement and more than a decade-long struggle by journalists and civil society activists. But the mere formation of the Act and the establishment of NIC are not enough for the effective implementation of the Act. The bureaucracy, which has been accustomed to work in an environment of secrecy for centuries, should make information-friendly mechanism and change working ambience to propel information culture in Nepal. Although the NIC has a vital role to that end, it has been more or less confined within the capital and is not proactively performing its role to promote information-culture.

Keywords: Right to Information, NIC, implementation, people's rights, public agencies

Introduction

In simple terms, information means data, facts, documents and news carrying a certain meaning or layers of meaning(s). Right to Information or Freedom of Information has been regarded as one of the fundamental human rights in modern days. Basically, the terms Right to Information (RTI) underscores the fact that all the humans have the right to access official documents held by government and other public bodies. The RTI laws, therefore, define a legal process, by which government information is available to the public access and use.

The right to information is also a foundational building block for democracy and participation, as well as a key tool for holding government to account and checking corruption. It is recognized in international laws, as well as the laws and constitutions of more than eighty five countries in the world.

Nepal's *Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2007* came into effect on 20 August 2007. Although the 1990

Constitution included RTI as a fundamental right,¹ it was practically useless for the lack of a law. The *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006* specified this provision (Article 27). Following the restoration of democracy in 2006, the government began formulating the RTI Act in 2007. The National Information Commission (NIC) was formed six months after the enactment of the RTI Act. The RTI Regulations came to force in 2009.

Nepal's ongoing political transition that began in 2006 has remained a major challenge to effective implementation of RTI.² RTI implementation remained on the sidelines of the political agenda throughout this period. Civil society advocacy has therefore been vital for operationalizing the law. In this regards, Freedom Forum and CCRI (Citizens' Campaign for RTI) has been a major civil society groups that has been advocating for and testing RTI implementation in Nepal.

¹ Article 16 in the *Part 3 Fundamental Rights of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990*.

² Freedom Forum (2013).

RTI as a Fundamental Right

RTI is a fundamental right of the people. It is also essential for effective exercise of various other rights guaranteed by the Constitution, particularly that of the right to freedom of speech and expression, and the rights of the mass media. As a fundamental right of the people, it holds special status and, by law, any other ordinary laws cannot change or supersede it.

The freedom of information was recognized as a fundamental right very early by the United Nations (UN). In the year 1946, during the first session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 59(1), which stated:³

Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ... the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the UN is consecrated. In ensuing international human rights instruments, freedom of information was not set out separately but as part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information.

In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Its Article 19 guarantees freedom of opinion and expression as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.⁴

The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, a legally binding treaty, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966. The corresponding provision in this treaty's Article 19 also guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression, in almost similar terms.

In Nepal, the *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007* also has guaranteed the right in article 27 as:

Every citizen shall have the right to demand or obtain information on any matters of concern to himself or herself to the public.

Provided that nothing in this article shall be deemed to compel any person to provide information on any matter about which confidentiality is to be maintained according to law.⁵

National Information Commission (NIC)

The RTI Act provides for a National Information Commission, a permanent mechanism to hear complaints in cases relating to the right to information. The Commission comprises three members headed by Chief Information Commissioner. Members of the Commission are appointed by the Government at the recommendation of a committee. The committee consists of the Minister for Information and Communications, the President of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) and the Speaker (of Parliament), with the latter acting as the chair. This has been described in later headings.

The commission has various mandates. The RTI Act outlines a much broader role for the National Information Commission as a promoter and protector of the right to information. The recognition and execution of this role by the Commission is indispensable for the successful implementation and the fulfillment of the objectives of the RTI Act. Apart from its major responsibility of adjudication of cases, it may issue orders for the public agencies, provide recommendations and suggestions to the government and other public bodies; prescribe timeframe to the public bodies to provide information.

One of the key functions of the NIC is to hear appeals of various types – against refusals to provide information, against wrongful classification of information, where individuals have been wrongly sanctioned for blowing the whistle, for misuse of information by individuals and regarding claims of compensation for failure to provide information. During the first two years of its existence, the NIC has received approximately 37 such cases, of which one involved a whistleblower, who was wrongly sanctioned; one was in relation to the wrongful classification of information; a number were for compensation and the rest were about refusals to provide access to information.

It would appear that the main focus of work of the NIC has, however, been outside of its formal obligations under the Act, in the areas of training and public outreach. It has conducted numerous training exercises, focusing on the supply-side (i.e. officials) in its formative year and more on demand-side (i.e. civil society). The NIC is also a public body under the law, since it is a body established by statute. It does not, however, appear to have taken any steps to discharge its obligations in this area, even to the extent of appointing an Information Officer. The Commission's

³Freedom Forum. (2008:12).

⁴Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948*.

⁵Article 27 of the *Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007*.

budget is provided by the government⁶. An annual report of the Commission's activities must be published and laid before Parliament every year.

Objective

The main objective of this article is to identify the National Information Commission under the Right to Information Act, 2007 and its role for the effective implementation of this Act to protect the people's right, as an information seeker by promoting the information culture in Nepal.

Methodology

This study was conducted in the Kathmandu valley in 2014. Research was based on the descriptive and exploratory research design. A mixed-method (both qualitative and quantitative) data have been used in this study. In-depth interview has been conducted with experts to explore the data. Quantitative data also have been used by seeking information with the government public agencies and used those data as a sample survey.

Present Status of the Implementation of RTI

Several achievements have been made in Nepal after the adoption of the *RTI Act 2007*. The National Information Commission (NIC) was formed as a judicial body and *RTI Regulation 2009* charted out, and efforts made to some extent to spread awareness among people to highlight the significance of RTI. But it is to say that the country has not witnessed any substantive progress regarding the implementation of RTI legislation.

It has been nearly eight years that the RTI Act has been adopted, but the volume of requests for information is considerably very low. The mechanisms such as *RTI Coordination Central Unit at Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM)* and Monitoring Unit at *Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC)* has not come to operation to push its implementation effectively and efficiently. Compliance with the proactive publication rules in the *RTI Act 2007* is also very limited.

Sadly, the RTI issue has not yet been so strong among the government bodies and even political parties. With this neither the demand side nor the supply side (that collectively includes the government, public bodies, civil society, the oversight body, the media, as well as the general public) is very actively engaged on this issue in case of Nepal.⁷

It would appear that only a few steps have formally been taken to implement the *RTI Act 2007*. Still a few public agencies have appointed information Officers (IOs), as required by section 6 of the Act. Although central government ministries and departments have largely complied with this obligation, local governments including the District Development Committees (DDCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) have not been able to follow suit.

Many IOs appear to be appointed from among the ranks of department spokespersons, even those could be said to be inconsistent tasks, as much as the spokesperson is supposed to paint the body in a positive light and the IO is supposed to release all information, good or bad.

Public bodies have very little or no training, whatsoever on RTI. Tailored capacity-building efforts for IOs are a greater necessity to see the extensive and successful use of RTI provisions. It is also unclear what measures have been taken to classify and update information, as required by the Act.

Public bodies in Nepal provide a lot of information on a proactive basis, and this appears to be an area where important progress has been made in recent years. For example, the Ministry of Education informed us that they hold a student census two times a year to ensure updated information.

Despite this, it would seem that very few, if any, public bodies have undertaken specific measures to ensure that they are meeting the proactive disclosure obligations set out in section 5 of the *RTI Act 2007* and Rule 3 of *RTI Regulation 2009*. According to a World Bank study, senior officials did not seem to be aware of these obligations or were under the impression that their existing proactive dissemination efforts were sufficient.

⁶ RTI Act (2007).

⁷ Dahal and Sapkota (2015).

Data of RTI Applications Seeking Information at Public Agencies by Freedom Forum on the Occasion of International Right to Know Day (28 Sep 2014)

S.N.	Name of Public Agency	Number of Applications	Number of Responses	Number of Complaint (O)	Number of Complaint (NIC)
1	Ministries	27	16	27	27
2	Commissions/Councils	31	11	31	
3	Departments	53	13	47	2
4	Division Road Offices	30	13	25	25
5	Division Urban and Building Construction	25	11	25	25
6	District Administration Office	75	40	71	71
7	District Development Committee	75	45	68	68
8	District Education Office	75	36	65	63
9	Municipalities	130	55	111	0
10	Ward	2	1	1	0
11	NIC		0	1	0
	Total:	523	241	472	281

Updated: 2071 Magh 2 (16 January 2015) by Nodanath Trital, Freedom Forum

It is a sample study conducted by an NGO, Freedom Forum, which was carried out by its RTI Thematic Coordinator Nodanath Trital⁸ on RTI in January-end. Trital said, "Almost all applications of information requests have been sent to the concerned public agencies via postal office. Most of the offices did not respond to application and we are compelled to lodge appeal to the National Information Commission". A total of 523 applications were filed and 241 were responded. Responding to RTI application does not mean that information was provided by the public agencies. When information was sought, information officers denied providing and at the moment the requester go for complaint and appeal process to the NIC as provisioned by the Act. Information is being sought from most of the government offices at the central and district levels. As the chart says, information was demanded from all 75 districts across the country by filing application directly or sending it through the postal. Trital further said, "Applications for information were not responded properly and most of the government offices have not appointed the information officers to facilitate information flow process"⁹

Provision regarding Commission

(Section 11)

An independent National Information Commission shall be established for the Protection, Promotion and practice of right to information.

⁸ I acknowledge Trital for allowing to use this data of his research under publication.

⁹ In a personal conversation/interview dated November 2013 (Saturday) at his office in Kathmandu.

There shall be Chief Information Commissioner and two other Information Commissioners in the Commission.

In order to appoint Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners there shall be a committee comprised as follows:

- The Speaker - Chairperson
- Minister or State Minister for Information and communication - Member
- President, Federation of Nepalese Journalist - Member

The Nepal Government shall appoint a Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners on the recommendation of the Committee pursuant to Subsection (3). While appointing in this manner, at least one female shall have to be included.

The Committee pursuant to Subsection (3) shall follow inclusive principles as much as possible while recommending for appointment of Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners.

The procedures of recommendation pursuant to Subsection 3 shall be as determined by the Recommendation Committee itself.

Functions, Duties and Powers of the Commission

In addition to the functions, duties and powers mentioned elsewhere in this Act, the functions, duties and powers of the Commission shall be as follows:¹⁰

- To observe and study the records and documents of public importance held in public agencies;
- To order for maintaining list of information related with documents and records held in such agency orderly;

¹⁰ Section 19 of the RTI Act, 2007.

- (c) To order concerned public agency to make information public for citizen's notification;
- (d) Prescribe timeframe and order concerned public agency to provide information demanded by applicant within that timeframe.
- (e) To order concerned party to fulfill liabilities pursuant to this Act;
- (f) Provide necessary suggestions and recommendations to Nepal Government and various other bodies related to information and communications regarding the protection and maintenance of right to information.
- (g) To issue other appropriate orders regarding the protection, promotion and exercise of right to information.

Appeals at NIC for Information

*Information appeals at NIC filed by citizen groups (2008-2012)*¹¹

Year	Govt. officials	Students	Businessmen	Legal practitioners	Judges	General public	Journalists	Total
2008/09	3	1	-	-	-	6	2	12
2009/10	10	11	-	3	1	11	3	39
2010/11	9	14	6	2	-	13	3	47
2011/12	22	20	4	4	-	57	2	109
2012/13	17	15	7	5	-	25	3	72
Total	61	61	17	14	1	112	13	279

Source: Dahal and Pathak (2013).

Members of the general public filed the largest number of complaints with the NIC, while students and government officials actively sought information. The number of journalists making RTI requests was low. The NIC data (Table 1) based on complaints shows who is seeking information and also reveals that there are denials to provide information resulting in filing of complaints at NIC.

Most of the appeals reaching the NIC were adjudicated in favor of the applicants. This publication is an attempt to analyze some RTI cases where citizens were able to obtain information. It includes only cases that reached the NIC and from among them only those that were unique either in terms of information sought or the agency that was involved. The length of time to resolve a case depended on the nature of the information sought, whether it was readily available, and the willingness of state agencies to cooperate.

Some Success Stories

#1: RTI and VAT fraud investigation

In spring 2010, Nepal's Inland Revenue Department (IRD) seized fake Value Added Tax (VAT) invoices that were being sold at local stationeries. Parliament had also raised questions on this issue to which the government had not provided a satisfactory response.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) that the Department of Revenue Investigation had formed a special task force for the investigation in 2010. It had submitted its report to the Director-General of IRD, who had forwarded it to MoF after which there had been no decision. Taranath Dahal, a senior journalist filed an RTI application at MoF seeking information on the tax evaders, on 8 May 2011. He wanted to know the names of VAT evaders (both individuals and businesses) and also the amount of revenue lost. He had asked for copies of the 'Investigation Report on Tax Evasions using Fake and Duplicate VAT Invoices.'¹²

The MoF did not provide the information within 15 days of the application, as required by law. Neither was the petitioner given a reason for not being provided the requested information. Next, Dahal took his case to the Finance Secretary, the first appellate authority, on 9 June 2011. The Finance Secretary did not respond immediately, and later said he was unable to make the disclosure. Responding to the resulting appeal, on 11 July 2011, the NIC ordered the Finance Ministry to provide, within three days, either the requested information, or an explanation to the Commission. The MoF did not comply with the order. Dahal made another appeal to the NIC on 15 August 2011. Earlier, on 21 June in the same year, MoF had also decided that the information could not be disclosed, through a ministerial decision.

Eventually, the MoF disclosed the information on 30 October 2011. This was in response to the NIC's final decision that stated that the requested information was a matter of public concern and therefore the petitioner had the right to be informed. The NIC added that it was the public's right to know if the taxes they paid had reached the exchequer, or had been stolen, and that people had the right to know how certain businesses might have taken the money using fake invoices. The order read, "If such scandals are made public, the concerned can be discouraged, and similar crimes are likely to be prevented. Transparency discourages while concealment of public information

¹¹ Dahal and Pathak (2014).

¹² Dahal and Pathak (2013).

could encourage it. Therefore, people will be deprived of information if the probe report on tax evasions is kept secret".

The MoF disclosure said that a total of 518 companies had been investigated but information on only 437 was disclosed. While the reported loss in taxes was NRs. 10 billion, because information on 81 companies in the probe report was not released, there was reason to suspect that the losses could have been higher.

#2: RTI helps a judge's reinstatement

In 2004, the Judicial Council dismissed Chitra Dev Joshi, a judge at the Syangja District Court, for allegedly commenting on politics¹³. He was accused of making defamatory remarks against King Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nepal's founder. Joshi denied making defamatory remarks and challenged the Council for not allowing him to make a statement before dismissal. He was also not provided access to documents that had led to the dismissal.

Joshi sought information on his dismissal from the Information Officer at the Judicial Council, on 11 January 2010. He wanted to examine the documents used by the Council to take the decision. The information officer refused the request and his subsequent appeal to the head of office was also refused. Next, Joshi appealed to the NIC seeking its assistance to obtain the documents.

On 1 March 2010, the NIC asked the Council for reasons for not providing the information and the Council responded with several justifications. The NIC then summoned the head of the Council to its office on 16 March 2010, but the letter was ignored. The NIC wrote to the Council again on 15 April 2010, asking its representatives to appear at the Commission within a week.

Eventually, after continuous follow-up by the NIC, the Judicial Council provided the information to the Commission on 9 February 2011. Meanwhile, it had also filed a writ at the Supreme Court challenging the NIC decision saying that it had caused it to breach the law by making the disclosure.

The information revealed that the applicant had not used the words he had been accused of using, and that the recording of the speech did not provide enough grounds for dismissal. He was eventually reinstated to

his position after the Supreme Court delivered a verdict ruling that the dismissal was illegal.

#3: Students can get answer sheet

The first information request related to examination was made on 14 June 2009. This was when Bijay Aryal, a BBS first year student, and four others, wrote to the Information Officer at Tribhuvan University (TU) seeking access to their examination answer sheets in *Business Statistics* and *English*. Failing to obtain information from the Information Officer, they knocked the doors of Chief Examinations Controller, the appellate authority, on 30 June 2009. The appeal eventually reached the NIC that ruled in favor of the students. However, the University did not provide the students access to their papers following which the NIC wrote again to TU asking for an examination for the denial. The University responded on 25 August 2009, saying that it was unable to provide the answer sheets because its laws and regulations did not permit access to examined answer sheets but allowed students to request a retotaling of their marks. Also the TU said that it had destroyed all off the copies of the answer sheets according to its own rules. Later students also asked to the NIC to nullify the information request. NIC ordered the TU to provide the answer sheets but again University did not provide it. Not satisfied with the NIC decision TU challenged the decision at the Supreme Court. The court ordered the TU to formulate rules to make answer sheets available to students in May 18, 2011. Now students can ask the Universities to have their answer sheets.¹⁴

What to do by NIC

- Meet its own openness obligations under the RTI Act, undertaking proactive publication and putting in place procedures for processing requests.
- Meet its other obligations by adopting a Code of Conduct for Commissioners and procedures for handling appeals, and by continuing to produce annual reports.
- Enhance its operations by adopting guidelines on mediation and imposing sanctions, by producing a report on secrecy provisions in other laws, by reviewing the classification guidelines adopted by government, and by developing more formal relations with other entities promoting

¹³ Pathak (2011).

¹⁴ Dahal and Pathak (2013).

implementation, such as Parliament and the nodal agency.

- Build the capacity of its staff, including its legal officer, through training and providing incentives for good performance.
- Promote better implementation by public bodies through developing guidelines on exceptions and a guidance note for NGOs, and by monitoring and reporting on implementation.
- Raise public demand for RTI through the media, brochures, a documentary, International Right to Know Day activities and training for NGOs.
- Pilot a programme of RTI Friends at about ten different public bodies, to create and publicize model implementation practices.
- Legal and administrative constraints, current possibilities and challenges; implication for the implementation of RTI, and the perceived measures to remove constraints.
- Political and financial impediments, if any; political support; strategies and measures to raise fund (especially to remain aloof from political pressure and interest).
- Cooperation and support from the government and other stakeholders; linkage and coordination with different agencies to tap resources or execute its program?
- Manpower structure and institutional capacity; status of knowledge management, capacity building measures.
- Develop the mechanism of complaints and appeals and their hearing.
- Promotional activities being carried out to protect, promote RTI and enhance information culture; Discussion, directives and their implementation.

Conclusion

NIC is a judicial organ provided by *RTI Act, 2007* should be active for the effectively implementation of the Act in Nepal. Internationally, the function of Information Commission is the same to promote the information seeking activities, to protect the people's right and establish the information culture in the nation. It has a judiciary right to punish the public agencies which do not provide information, according to the Act. But on the other hand, it is not only a court for information, but also a campaigner of information process for demand and supply-side. It should be expanded

throughout the nation and should launch a campaign to insist people for seeking information. The NIC is also a public body under the law, since it is a body established by statute. It does not, however, appear to have taken any steps to discharge its obligations in this area, even to the extent of appointing an IO. Due to NIC, Nepal has made some success cases to receive information those have been the precedents for the right to information movement. But as the rights have been provided to the NIC, it has not been so active and not performed its duties proactively in Nepal due to the various causes. It has a strong and proactive role and as the Act provided its rights to be expanded throughout the nation. But it has been confined within the capital Kathmandu and just waiting appeals.

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Media Management in Nepal

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Abstract

The management of media institutions is less debated topic in Nepal. All the debate, discussions and even research are focused more on the rights of journalists and press freedom. All the efforts from government and non-government sector are more concentrated on how to promote freedom of expression and protect right to know of people through the use of mass media. There are already various laws, rules and regulations to regularize and protect media sector in the country. The proposed new constitution will be proved further press-friendly, as it is all set to mention press freedom in the preamble and media rights have been accepted as fundamental rights of the people. But the question is — can all these things be achieved in absence of competent management practices within media houses? The answer is obviously a big 'No'. The fact is — incompetent and poorly-managed media cannot produce quality contents. This research article tries to explore the understanding and status of media management in Nepal — an eye-opener for media-owners and managers to adopt professional management practices at one hand and to pave ways for further research in this area.

Keywords: media management, professional practice, media institutions, ownerships, public enterprises

Background

Despite years of political instability and conflict in Nepal, the only sector that has been believed to achieve remarkable progress is the media sector. The dramatic growth in the number of newspapers (340)¹, television channels (58)² and radio stations (515)³ in recent years show rapid development of this sector. But, at the same time, media institutions have also been criticized to deliver the same pattern of contents. Audiences hardly find any variety in their contents.

The programming pattern and news of almost all media institutions are based on traditional format with a lack of creativity. The taste of audience has been felt ignored. By considering these facts, one can easily know that there is just a quantitative development of media sector, while qualitative development is challenged by many. The uncontrolled growth of media institutions will only add to the confusion and chaos contributing to the negative impacts of media on the society.

There might be various factors responsible for the obstruction in the smooth development of media

sector in Nepal. One vital factor that has been identified for the chaotic situation in media sector is the poor management of media institutions. (Bista, 2006:44)

Over the last few years, even government seems serious over the management of media institutions. Government has realized that just a press-friendly law with a high degree of press freedom is not a panacea for the healthy development of media sector. Therefore, the government has come up with the merger concept between Radio Nepal and Nepal Television to transform them into a single entity of Public Service Broadcasting with an intention to properly manage government media to best serve people.⁴ (Government of Nepal, Budget Speech of Fiscal Year 2015/16, 2014:34)

Prior to this, government took a policy for the joint use of telecommunication and broadcasting technology and infrastructure among all concerned service providers to avoid duplication of works and to make such works cost effective and accessible to all (p. 51)⁵.

¹ Press Council Nepal, Annual Report, 2013

² MoIC TV List. (2013)

³ MoIC FM List. (2013).

⁴ To make further effective the right to information of people, necessary legal and institutional framework will be arranged to set up a Public Service Broadcaster by merging government owned media namely Radio Nepal and Nepal Television.

⁵ The present practices of building own separate infrastructures by all the service providers have made the telecommunication, radio and television broadcasting, internet service or cable

Being based on this policy government in later budget statements announced to recruit a common reporter at districts for *Radio Nepal*, *Nepal Television* and *Rastriya Samachar Samiti*. Although, this policy is yet to be implemented, it was a unique example towards the direction of practicing competent management in government media, reducing the extra burden of cost for many reporters at every district. Nevertheless, the cost cutting measure cannot be the only indicator for competent management.

Media sector has been facing various problems including serious economic crisis. Journalists working even in big media houses are often complaining for no or less pay. At the other hand, Media owners have their own worries. Existing media owners are scared for the loss of their investment and potential investors are thus reluctant to invest in media sector. These all problems are somewhere attached with media management. These problems can be easily settled down if handled media institutions systematically adopt the concept of professional management. To start the professional and modern practice of management, media owners first should learn what media management is and how it can be practiced.

Concept of Media Management

Media management is relatively a new concept that evolved only after late 19th century. The concept of media management came into existence, when media institutions began to transform into business entities from public service entity and converted purely into an industry. Now, the media has been grown up as a commercial industry involving in production, selling and distribution of media products to millions or billions of people around the world and generating huge sums of money. (Regmee, 2006)

The development in communication technology, emergence of advertisement, development of various professions such as communication and journalism, compelled to grow the media as business.

The management principles and techniques had a long history of development. After the Industrial Revolution in 18th century, the theoretical approach of the business, marketing, and management started to apply

in real life practice. Various scholars had contributed to develop the theoretical concept on how to run and manage the business effectively and efficiently.

But it was only during late 19th century, the concept of media business started to take shape. Before the innovation of radio waves, there used to be a press sector as media.

America has 300 years of history of newspaper publication (Williams, 1978). There were three fundamental concepts of the newspaper publication-the press is a social/public institution, the press is a business, and the press is a link between organization and its members.

If newspaper is a business, it has to run with business approach where maximizing the profit by exploiting the limited resources should be the prime concern. If it is a social public institution, it should be socially responsible by fulfilling basic social obligations and meeting other philanthropic and ethical standards. Following either approach cannot be sufficient for the survival that is why mix or balanced approach is the solution for all media institution.

Media Management simply refers to the management of media houses. To better understand media management, we can split it into two terms i.e. Media and Management.

Media is defined as the means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, and magazines, which reach or influence people widely⁶.

McQuail (2005) has accepted media as institution with main theoretical features such as the core activity of media institution is the production and distribution of information and culture, it is controlled by self-regulations, and media are free and in principle independent of political and economic power. (p. 60)

"The term management refers to the process of getting things done, effectively and efficiently, through and with other people". (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2002)

This definition has covered almost all of the areas as far as management concerns. The process indicates planning, organizing, leading and controlling. "Getting things done through and with other people" refers to the basic essence of management to achieve organizational goal collectively by integrating various skills and expertise of others. "Effectively and efficiently" are other two dimensions, management

services more expensive. To avoid duplication of works and to make such works cost effective and accessible to all, and to maximize the outputs from the telecommunication or broadcasting technologies, a policy compatible to use such infrastructures jointly by the service providers shall be implemented

⁶ dictionary.com

should concern. Achieving predetermined target in the given timeframe undermining the excessive use of resources is to become an effective whereas achieving the target in the same timeframe with same output exerting minimum level of resources is to get efficiency.

Thus, the concept of management is doing things systematically. Media organizations, unlike previous days, should involve themselves in planning, organizing, leading and controlling- the four basic stages of management process. (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2002)

Management: A Universal Concept

Management in media institutions is not vastly different than the management in other non-media organizations. The management philosophy, theories, principles, managerial tools and techniques are generally the same in media management as well. But because of the unique nature of media industry with distinct nature of media product, the practice of management can be different to some extent. The management practice in media is even more challenging than other industry sectors because "media have the dual character being both a commercial enterprise and a key element in the political, cultural and social life of society. They cannot be left entirely to the marketplace." (McQuail, 2005: 244)

Mass media experts believe that media institutions are more for the public than for profit. In this way, all media organizations are considered as public industry even if they are running under private ownership.

Many people argue that professional management approach is not necessary in government media because they are funded by the government and they do not have obligation to make profit for the survival in the market. But, government media too involved in production, sell products, compete with others and that is why it needs effective management.

Evolution of Media Management in Nepal

The history of management practice in the world is not so long in comparison to the practice of management in other sectors. Moreover, the history of media management in least developed countries like Nepal is even shorter. The evolution of management practice in Nepali media institutions can be traced back at the

period of the establishment of media institution in the country.

The first *Rana* Prime Minister Jung Bahadur brought hand press (*Giddhe* press) from London visit in 1908 (1851). Using the same Press, Prime Minister Dev Shumsher started to publish *Gorkhapatra* in his regime which contributed to the institutional development of print media in Nepal. Dev Shumsher issued an order called *Sanad* to manage the publication of *Gorkhapatra*. The *Sanad* was the written order comprising what to publish or what not to in *Gorkhapatra* including the provision of fund, human resources with their pay scales including other managerial provisions (*Sanad*:1958). This can be termed as the founding stone in the development of media management in Nepal.

The period of 2007 – 2017 (i.e. 1950 – 1960 AD) too didn't prove good in the development of management. (Regmee, 2006:30) Many newspapers published during the time were run by political parties while *Radio Nepal* and *Gorkhapatra* were run under the full government ownership and control.

Again, after the introduction of *Panchayat* system, there was even no favorable situation in the growth of media. The same situation continued till 2046 (1989).

After the restoration of democracy in 2047 (1990), the *Constitution of Nepal of 2047 (1990)* guaranteed press freedom along with the freedom of speech as the fundamental rights of people. It was clearly mentioned in the constitution that no newspaper, radio and television could be seized or cancelled because of the publication and broadcast of any news, articles, opinions and other materials.⁷

The government took liberal policy in economic sector as well as in media. Parliament issued *National Broadcasting Act* in 2049 (1993) paving the way for private sector to establish FM radio stations and television channels. (*National Broadcasting Act, 1993*:7)⁸ Such developments in media sector contributed to the rapid growth of media institutions fueling the need for effective management in media institutions.

Likewise, *People's Movement* 2006 drastically changed the political landscape of the country with an establishment of republicanism and inclusive

⁷ *Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 2047 (1990)*, Article 13

⁸ Mentioning as participation of private sector in production and broadcasting of program.

democracy paving the way for the further growth of media institutions in the country. *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 (2007)* created very favorable atmosphere to flourish media sector by incorporating the phrase "full press freedom" in the preamble of the constitution.

The emergence of big media houses and the development of media management are interrelated with each other. As good management is the most important tool of the success, big media houses have left no option instead of adopting professional management.

Still, many media experts are of the opinion that media cannot be treated as business like other non-media business and that is why there is no necessity to give more attention to its management. They argue that media organizations should not run behind profit rather should consider the public service. They are true to some extent, but media organization should be properly managed, not only for making profit but also for the effective presence among the audience, viewers or listeners and even for the survival in the long run.

Varied Media Institutions

Nepalese media institutions since long have been practicing media management knowingly or unknowingly. The management style and pattern of media institutions are varied from institution to institution. There are many responsible factors for the differences in the management practices, which are:

1. Nature of the media institutions
2. Purpose of the media institutions
3. Ownership and types of company
4. Size and Coverage

1. Nature of the media institutions

The nature of the media institutions determines the way of management to some extent. The management in electronic media is different than the management in print media. There are differences in the tasks they perform. The production process, distribution, promotion campaign among others is varied between electronic media and print media. Moreover, the application of technology, necessity and utilization of resources and the skills they need are varied.

2. Purpose of the media institution

Purpose of media institution is another factor that influences the practice of management. Every

organization might have clearly defined its own vision, mission, goals and objectives. There can be the clear priority between profit making and public service. If it is directed toward achieving the maximum profit, the management style should also be adopted in the way of making profit, and if it is only for public service then the management style should also be guided in that way.

Government media are, that is why, different than private media in terms of practicing management as they both have distinct purpose.

3. Ownership

Ownership is one of the most key factors in determining the management of the institutions. Government and non-government media cannot have the same "management style"⁹. Besides, In Nepal we can find following categories:

- Media institutions operating as Public enterprises
- Media institutions operating as Private Limited company/ Public Limited Company
- Media institutions operating as a Single owner company
- Community supported media institutions
- Media institutions supported by political parties, NGOs, INGO's or some groups.

Since the 1930s and particularly after *World War II* (1939 – 1945), many Public Enterprises (PEs), were created in both developed and developing countries to promote economic development, reduce mass unemployment and/or ensure national control over the overall direction of the economy, especially in developing countries. The popularity and effectiveness of public enterprises during the time has been reflected in a statement of Hanson (1959) that "Public enterprises without a plan can achieve something; a plan without public enterprises is likely to remain on paper." (p. 183)

However, the popularity of PE's is gradually declining in recent days due to the rise of corruption, management inefficiencies and overstaffing. But, almost all government media are still running under the concept of public enterprises in Nepal.

⁹ The various ways of dealing with the subordinates at the workplace is called management style. Some of these styles are autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire etc.

The management of these institutions is frequently attacked with the criticisms of having bureaucratic system. Although the media institutions simply deserve different style of management, almost all government media are run in the same management style copied from the government bureaucracy.

Beyond government sector, majority of media institutions established in Nepal is in the form of single owner company and/or private limited company. Apart from these, there are various media institutions supported by political parties, NGOs, INGOs, some religious and other groups.

The management pattern is different as per the different nature of their ownerships.

4. Size and coverage

Size and coverage is also another dimension which influence the management style and pattern. The big media house with wide coverage might have more complicated management practice in comparison to local and small scale media institutions with limited coverage such as FM radio stations and local newspapers.

Management in Government Media

Government Media institutions have occupied the prominent place in Nepal's media sector. They are pioneer in the development of media sector in the country. There is no doubt that the government media institutions have made significant contributions to fulfill the information demand of the people since very long.

Besides, government media have set example of bearing high degree of social responsibility during 25 April earthquake measuring 7.8 M on the Richter scale. *Radio Nepal* went live on air immediate after the first powerful earthquake at 11.56 am on 25 April 2015. *Radio Nepal* continued its live broadcasting around the clock for over a total of 10 days. *Radio Nepal* also started various radio programs under the concept of life-saving radio broadcasting and life-line communication. *Radio Nepal* entirely focused on serving people by disseminating life-saving information by breaking the routine schedule of news and programs.

Gorkhapatra Daily, *Radio Nepal*, *Nepal Television*, *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* are some of the fore-front media institutions, which have still been serving the country and countrymen by delivering news and

information, entertainment, and other various information useful to the daily lives of people.

These days, however, the management of such media institutions has become the prime concern. This has already become a matter of debate whether the management of government media institutions is effective enough or not in fulfilling the expectation of the people for quality and impartial media contents.

Most of the government institutions have been established and run under the concept of Public Enterprise. Although *Gorkhapatra Daily* and *Nepal Television* are established under the separate acts *Gorkhapatra Sansthan Act* and *Communication Corporation Act 2028 (1971)* respectively, the both institutions are public enterprises.

Radio Nepal and *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* are even more directly owned and controlled by the government under separate legal frameworks.

Problems in Government Media Management

Government media institutions are facing various problems. As government media are guided and run by the concept of public enterprise in one or other way, all the shortcomings and problems of the management of public enterprise are equally applicable to the management of government media. These problems are identified as inefficient management, lack of efficient personnel, weak labor relation, delay, political interference, bureaucratic tendency, administered pricing system, poor profitability, lack of commercial spirit, and increase in corruption among others (Joshi, 1996).

In addition to the problems mentioned above, other various problems are also on surface, among which the most critical problem of government media is identified as its double standard motive — public service and commercial (Article 3 of *Radio Broadcasting Development Committee Formation Order, 1984*)¹⁰.

As government doesn't provide regular budget to government media, they should earn on their own for the survival in the marketplace. But, at the same time they have an obligation to reach to the millions of

¹⁰ Under the section "Functions, duties and rights of the Committee" of the Formation Order 1984, it is clearly mentioned that *Radio Nepal* will run advertisement service from commercial point of view to make *Radio Nepal* economically self-reliant, while it states that the main duty of *Radio Nepal* shall be the overall welfare of the country.

peoples living in far remote areas, always known as non-profitable market segments, where private sector does not want to go. Government media are spending huge sum of money for the production and dissemination of non-commercial contents that contribute to the economic crisis in government media inviting numerous managerial problems in the lack of resources.

Political appointment of the executive of government media institutions is another big problem that directly reflects on the management issues. Sometimes, direct appointment of personalities of non-media background at the top-most managerial posts has even worsened the situation.

The lack of management knowledge and understanding among top level employees is another problem of management in government media. Management in government media also lacks professionalism as they are guided by lengthy government rules, regulations and directives. ("*Sarkari Media ko Abhyas*", p. 35).

Government media have long been criticized for being a recruitment center of political cadres. This trend has seriously weakened diverse aspects of human resource management of government media.

Management problems are of two types, viz. internal and external created by internal and external environmental factors of the organization. Internal environments are controllable and management can take necessary actions to bring it into the track, but the external environment which is vague and beyond the control of organization can bring serious problems. Therefore, media managers should be able to anticipate or forecast the potential changes in the external environment and plan accordingly to avoid serious problems affecting the organizations in the future.

The Way Forward

The practice of media management in Nepali media institutions is still in infant stage. Many media owners even do not know the concept of media management.¹¹ They take the major managerial decisions in their own personal intuition and experience, rather than being based on the scientific way of decision-making along with adopting participatory decision-making process in their organization.

The problem starts from the establishment and ownership pattern to the policy formulation and daily operation of media institutions. Government should initiate the reform process in the management of media houses not only in government sector, but for the non-government media as well.

Government media institutions are seemed too weak from the management perspectives. There is redundancy in works, wastages of resources, not utilization of limited resources to get maximum result. Problems are everywhere including human resource management and daily operations.

Media has already turned into a commercial institution and there is no way rather accepting and understanding marketing and managerial principles by redefining them in the context of media products. Government should set the example by applying professional management approach in government media by minimizing the unwanted control and influence in policy and operational level.

Should explore possibilities of introducing media and business management curricula aimed at managers and senior editors at college providing graduate level courses in business management and administration.¹²

The intellectual debates, discussions and research should also be accelerated in the area of media management. All media managers should be oriented to the management knowledge and skills.

As government recently introduced the merger of state-run broadcasting media *Radio Nepal* and *Nepal Television*, the same concept should be replicated in some areas in the private sector media as well.

There is mushrooming growth of FM Radio stations and television channels in the private sector creating unhealthy competition. This can be controlled to some extent by implementing merger concept between two or more FM stations and TV channels.

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¹¹ op.cit. Dhungel (2013)

¹² UNESCO (2013:82).

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Heritage Information in the *Vaṃśāvalī*: Examples from the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī*

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Abstract:

Chronicles are the historical narratives, better known as vaṃśāvalī in Nepāl and India as well. The "heritage information" is abundant in the form of historical writings, myths, legends, tales and other forms collected in such vaṃśāvalī written over different centuries. I take some examples of "heritage information" of festive events as a part of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Nepāl from the famous Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī (VG) written in the fourteenth century. While the entries in the vaṃśāvalī are considered to pertain to a distant past, its knowledge value for modern scholars and/or readers are undeniable. Their proper analysis shall open up newer and broader perspectives to know the past, as well as to document the past knowledge and experiences for both the present and the future.

Keywords: chronicle, *vaṃśāvalī*, history, heritage, ICH, festivals, information, legends

Background ¹

A popular body of historical texts in Nepāl, called the *vaṃśāvalī*, have been seen as a later continuation of what Dr. Thāpar (2009:3) refers to as the "*itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition". Different from merely a genealogy list or king-list², for instance, the text I refer to are actually historical narratives.

Etymologically, the English word 'chronicle' may be the closest translation to *vaṃśāvalī*, meaning "continuous historical account of events, in a chronology" and takes its origin from Greek word, *chroniká* meaning annals or chronology. But Medieval European chronicles like *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (History of the Kings of Britain), Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil* (Original Chronicle) and others too are not merely genealogical or dynastical histories but carry a larger social history messages. The same is true with the

historical traditions from *Rājatarāṅginī* of India and other *vaṃśāvalī* from Nepāl.

The *vaṃśāvalī* have a very recognizable format — an initial section concerned with cosmological and mythological origin linking different clans and lineages, thereafter an early history of local rulers, and finally the dynastic succession narrated at a greater length.³

The *vaṃśāvalī* often narrates the deeds of chronicler's ancestors or of the kings. "Who would not be proud of the great deeds of one's ancestors?" questions Dr. Mukunda Rāj Aryāl. He adds, "Everyone is interested in knowing about one's clan history, origin and therefore about oneself, then it's not new for the royal clans."⁴

Appraisal of one's clan or ancestry, or often of those in power (e.g. the king) is historically quite common. This is evident in *purāṇic śloka*s, and in different inscriptions, including that of *Licavi* King Mānadeva (464 AD) at *Cā(n)gu*, or even that of another *Licavi* King Jayadeva II (713 – 733 AD) at *Paśupati*.

This popular poetic lines by *ādikavi* Bhānubhakta Ācārya (1814 – 1868), considered the first *Nepālī* poet, also portray this claim:

*pāhāḍko ati besa deś tanahūmā
śrīkṣṇa brāhmaṇa thiyā |*

¹ I am thankful to Prof. Rāma Krishna Regmee and Nutandhar Śarmā for guiding throughout the study of the *vaṃśāvalī* of Nepāl. This is revised from MA MCJ thesis work Rājopādhyāya (2014) submitted to *Purvāñchal University, Birātnagar*. I credit the use of term "heritage information" to Prof. Regmee. However, I take the responsibility for this writing.

I have used International Alphabet for Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) symbols for non-Sanskrit readers, however in some cases I have tried to retain popular spellings, with diacritical marks.

² See, for instance: Shreṣṭha (2012:47).

³ *op.cit.* Thāpar (2009:5)

⁴ Prof. Dr. Mukunda Rāj Aryāl (2013 August 8 Thursday, personal conversation at *Hanumāndhokā Palace, Kāthmāṇḍu*)

*khup uccā kula āryavaṃśī huna gai
satkarmamā man diyā ||
vidyāmā paṇi jo dhurandhara vaī
śikṣa malāī diyā |
inko nāti ma bhānubhakta bhani hum
yo jāni cihnī liyā ||*⁵

(There was a *brāhmaṇ* by the name of *Śrīkṛṣṇa* at *Tanahū*, a good country in hills, who was of highest clan of *ārya* birth and enjoyed good deeds. He, who was so adept in education, taught me. Know all that I am his grandson — by the name of *Bhānubhakta*.)

In the Hindu system, most trace their origin to eternal elements as the sun (called *sūrya-vaṃśī*), the moon (*candra-vaṃśī*), the fire (*agni-vaṃśī*) etc. or to purāṇic heroes as *Raghu* (*Raghu-vaṃśī*). Some *tāgādhārīs* (cord-wearers) trace their *gotra* as ancestry to great saints (*rṣis*) and the same is also expressed in the ritual of *gotroccāraṇa*.

While glorifying one's lineage is one popular purpose of the chronicles, they, however, serve other purposes too. In relation to the Laswell's theory⁶, such purposes can be summarized in Table 1 below:⁷

Table 1: Functions of Chronicles

Value	Functions	Remarks
Surveillance	Record of events	e.g. VG
	Extension of knowledge of past	e.g. <i>Gorkhā Vaṃśāvalī</i>
	Stories of human civilization	<i>Ibid.</i>
	Description of deities	e.g. <i>Devamālā-vaṃśāvalī</i>
Dissemination	Sharing	Many <i>vaṃśāvalīs</i> are copied from other writings, modified and updated.
	Transfer of knowledge	e.g. VG
	Preaching messages	e.g. <i>Devamālā-vaṃśāvalī</i>
Co-relation	Ancestral linkage	e.g. <i>Gorkhā Vaṃśāvalī</i> traces ancestral history of the <i>Shāh</i> dynasty.
	Linkage with other disciplines	Not just history and historiography, but several other social science subjects.
Others	Sovereignty of kingship ⁸	e.g. VG

⁵ Believed to be written by *ādikavi* Bhānubhaktaka Āchārya, the verse is c.f. Dhakāl (2007:43).

⁶ On Laswell's theory, see: Laswell, Harold Dwight. (2007). The Structure and Function of Communication in Society. *Īletīṣim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi* [Communication Theory Research Journal]. Vol. 24. p. 215-228.

⁷ Rājopādhyāya (2014:81). Credit to Prof. Regmee's assistance in preparing this table.

⁸ *op.cit.* Thāpar (2009:4-8).

Copying *vaṃśāvalīs* was also considered a devotional act. Leinhard (1988:xvii) adds:

Copying manuscripts, be they Buddhist or Hindu, was not only considered to be a contribution towards the furtherance of learning and literature, but was also regarded as an act of piety. Whoever wrote down or caused to write down a religious text, or presented it as a gift, was performing a devotional act and, moreover, accumulating long-lasting merit.

Alongside, Śarmā⁹ adds that *vaṃśāvalīs* are written as *brahmayajña* duties defined by *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*. He is of an opinion that *vaṃśāvalīs* are also meant to be recited, similar to that of the *purāṇas*.¹⁰

The Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī (VG)

I take an example of the famous *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī* (VG) written in the 14th century. This *vaṃśāvalī* was previously called *Bendall Vaṃśāvalī*, as Prof. Cecil Bendall¹¹ found the MS "in the cold weather of 1898-99 in *Kāthmāṇḍu*'s Durbar Library"¹² (Bīr Library). This was later popularly called the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī*, as a hand-written catalog termed it *Gopālavaṃśādi prācīna rājavaṃśāvalī* (Nepal, 1988). But Dr. Maheś Rāj Pant questions if this could be *vaṃśāvalī* proper, as the chronicler never mentions it thus.¹³

Structurally, the VG is a 48 folio palm-leaf manuscript (MS) measuring 28 cms x 4 cms, and written in *Bhujīmola* script (a fly-headed variation of the *Newārī* script). It is popularly divided into following sections:

- V₁ (Folio 17 - 30a) in corrupt Sanskrit language is in the form of annals or king-lists. It ends at crowning of Jayasthitirājamalla (1382 – 1395 AD) in NS 503 (i.e. 1383 AD).
- V₂ (Folio 30b - 36a) in old *Newārī* language lists births of royal and distinguished persons. It begins with NS 396 (i.e. 1276 AD).

⁹ In a written response dated 15th March 2014 Saturday.

¹⁰ For instance, consider the following two examples — in the folio 18b of VG is written:

Tata athātare sūryavaṃśasautpati kathāyāmi ||
(Hereafter, in the middle, [I] now tell of the origin of Solar Line.) Also in folio 30b:
Svastiḥ bhūta vṛttāntar likhitiṇca sṛṇu ||
(Greetings, listen to the chronicle as it was written down.) Both translations from that of Vajrācārya in *Nepālī* language. (Vajrācārya and Malla, 1985).

¹¹ Prof. Cecil Bendall of Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal came with Mahāmohpādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstrī and Pundit Vinod Hari Bhattachārya to study the hand-written documents at Bīr Library in 1898-99.

¹² Bendall (1903:1-3). c.f. Pant (1993).

¹³ Dr. Pant (2013 August 22, personal conversation at author's residence).

c) *V*₃ (Folio 36b - 63b) is continuation to *V*₂ and is marked by difference in style. It begins with NS 379 (i.e. 1259 AD). Chronology is not maintained in this section.

Much of what *vaṃśāvalī*s contain are out of date now. The places names are old; language, words, grammar, structure, the writing and the paper are all old. But this antiquity of the *vaṃśāvalī*s is what makes them of great value. Ricardii, Jr. (1973:106) asserts such *vaṃśāvalī*s as important also to "read intelligently the work of later historians (e.g. Levi)." In the same sentence, he observes that information therein "has not [yet] been fully exploited." (*Ibid.*). Malla (1985) too points that long after the discovery of the MSS, yet not a comprehensive book has been published, let alone a critical edition.¹⁴

ICH and Heritage Information

We have, from our ancestors, not only received "heritage" that are tangible in form, but also a vast socio-cultural knowledge and practices in the form of traditions, arts and crafts, skills, rituals, events and the cosmic understanding. These, in its independent continuation or sometimes linked with tangible heritages, shapes the way how people continue tradition; that is to say heritage act as vehicle of cultural transmission over generations.

Here, let's look at how the *Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritages 2003* (p. 6) defines ICH:

"practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage"

It is important to note here that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals identify their own cultural heritages. Some like to term it "living cultural heritage" instead, particularly for the lively and dynamic characteristics of such "human treasures" transferred from generation to generation. Interestingly, this transmission can take place in both traditional and contemporary manner at the same time. This means ICH provides scope for "contemporary" addition to "traditional" practices, knowledge, expression and/or skills. So, it would

always be wrong to see ICH with a pure conservative-only lens; therefore, it must be seen as a dynamic field with room for timely changes as the practitioner community makes every time.

The Convention also defines what actually falls under ICH. Broadly these five domains cover almost everything that fall under ICH. Many heritages that we speak of is either a subset of these domain or often cross-cuts two or many points in the list. For instance, the *Buṅga Dya* chariot festival (*Rāto Matsyendranāth Rath Jātrā*) can be studied to cover aspects of at least four points in following list on domains of ICH¹⁵, according to the Convention (p. 8):

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

Here, I limit the use of term "heritage information" to ICH information only, for the purpose of this article. One can find abundant "heritage information" in the form of historical writings, myths, legends, tales and other forms. Much of these information are also collected in different *vaṃśāvalī*s written over different centuries, including the VG of 14th century.

Among the above-listed domains, I take examples only on "festive events" under the domain enumerated (c). As mentioned above, the selected examples in the following sub-heading may cross-cut other domains of ICH as well.

Selected Examples of Heritage Information from VG

#1. *Holī* (Folio 21a):

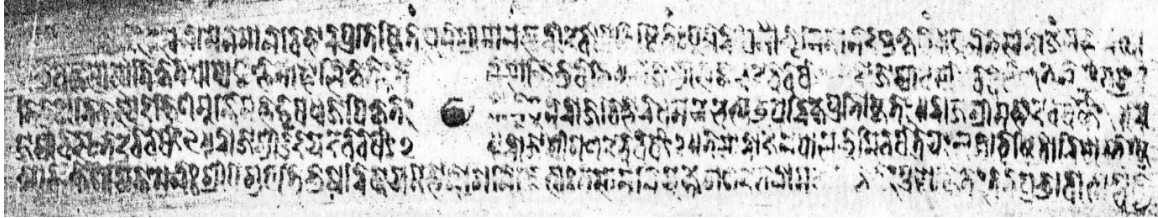
Falling on the full-moon day of *Phāgu* month (i.e. February - March in the Gregorian calendar), *Holī* or *Phāgu Pūrṇimā* is known as festival of colors and water, while some also associate it with love and fertility.

¹⁵ The *Buṅga Dya Rath Jātrā* or the chariot festival of *Rāto Matsyendranāth*, for instance, has its own folktales that has been told for generations. Such tales and/or expressions are studied under domain (a). A lot of rituals and festive events, including the annual life-cycle ritual and the chariot festival – all of these comes under domain (c). Domain (d) is of particular interest as *Buṅga Dya* cult has a knowledge about nature and, in Robert I. Levy's (1990) words "mesocosm" in the traditional organization of the *Newār* town. Next, the craft of chariot-making itself is one best example to the domain (e).

¹⁴ Long after the discovery of the MSS though, few attempts have been made to critically examine the VG. One such attempt is Vajrācārya (2007) published posthumously by CNAS/TU.

Hindus also relate the festival with the story of *Holikā*, a demoness and sister of *asura* (demon) King *Hiraṇyakaśyapu*, burnt to death in a treachery to kill the king's son and Lord *Viṣṇu*'s devotee *Prahlād*, despite her boon of immunity against fire. People in some parts of India also celebrate it in reverence to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*'s divinely affairs with *Rādhā* or the divine play (*Rāsālīlā*), while in certain parts of South India, it is also celebrated in reverence to Lord *Kāmadeva*, the god of human love and desire.

Figure 1: Folio 21a of VG



Source: Vajracārya and Malla (1985:3)

The stories and legends of *Holī* celebration varies from place to place. In Figure 1 above, the lines 1-2 of folio 21a of the VG of 14th century *Bhaktapur*, presents a different account. It states, thus, in corrupt Sanskrit:

- 1: ... *puna tasya rājeṃ mahāmutpā* -
2: *ta bhavet tasya sāmṭi kṛta poṣya pūrṇimā holi*
kṛtam tena sānti bhavati |¹⁶

(There was a big disturbance during his rule. In order to propitiate it, the Holi festival was observed on the day of *Pauṣa Pūrṇimā* (full-moon day of the month of *Pauṣa* [i.e. December-January]). This subsided the disturbance.)¹⁷

Two things are important to note here in this particular entry in the VG. First, the purpose behind the celebration as the legend goes is of different nature. *Holī* festival described herein this folio of VG and that in actual practice in the *Phāgu* month is purposefully different. Next the months of celebration is different too. *Holī* celebration in the *Pauṣa Pūrṇimā* (December - January) as written here is two months ahead than its present-day practice.

The present-day *Holī* and the *Holī* of VG (folio 21a) may be evidently different, by purpose and the time of celebration. However, the knowledge and historicity of this festival related to King *Mānadeva*'s (464 – 505 AD)

regime in 5 - 6th century *Licchavi* period is worth taking into consideration, and so are such precious "heritage information" of the VG and other *vaṃśāvalī*s.

#2. *Cā(n)gu Kalaśa Yātrā* (Folio 30b):

On the 12th day of the bright half of the *Śrāvaṇa* month (i.e. on *Śrāvaṇa Śukla Dvādaśī*), Lord *Cā(n)gu Nārāyaṇa* is set on a foot-journey to *Hanumāṇdhokā* Palace, *Kāthmāṇḍu* (or the old *Guṇapo* Palace), accompanied by goddesses *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* — all in the form of

holy *kalaśas* (holy silver pots). They are carried by the main priests, alongside his *Bhaḍel* assistants across the *Manoharā* River.

The *Cā(n)gu Kalaśa Yātrā* is actually organized twice a year, with almost the same ritual, except the offering of milky stalk of the plant *Arum Colocasia* on the one falling on *Śrāvaṇa Śukla Dvādaśī*. The purpose of the two *kalaśa yātrās* are different; their lore and few rituals varies — the *kalaśa yātrā* of *Pauṣa Śukla Pūrṇimā* (December - January) is based on another lore that the then King of *Kāthmāṇḍu* ordered his people to display empty vessels on the way, as suggested by *Malla*'s tutelary deity *Taleju*, only to show a bad omen to Lord *Cā(n)gu Nārāyaṇa*, who would have otherwise returned back to his heavenly abode at *Vaikuṇṭha*.

We, herein this article, focus on the *kalaśa yātrā* of *Śrāvaṇa* (July - August) only. The history of this *yātrā* is dated back to the reign of King *Śrī Puṣpadeva* in the VG folio 30b as presented in Figure 2 in the following page:

- 3: *caṅguyā dudu phaṃka* -
4: *yā hetuḥ śrīpvasyedeṇa rājāsa prajyāsa asahana*
deśasa marhaṃ ḍava, thvatesa sātaka yaṇa,
mhaṃgvasa kyaṃṇā | guṇilā thova duhrisi konhu
dudu phaṃka -
5: *na, khaṃṇe thvana dvārasa teye guhrato*
ekāpalakāsakhī, abhiseṣa śraparakṣā,
mahraṃnivāraṇa |¹⁸

(An epidemic spread in the land [of *Cā(n)gu*] during the reign of King *Śrī Puṣpadeva* after (eating) the

¹⁶ In Vajracārya's reading of the MS in Vajracārya and Malla (1985:29).

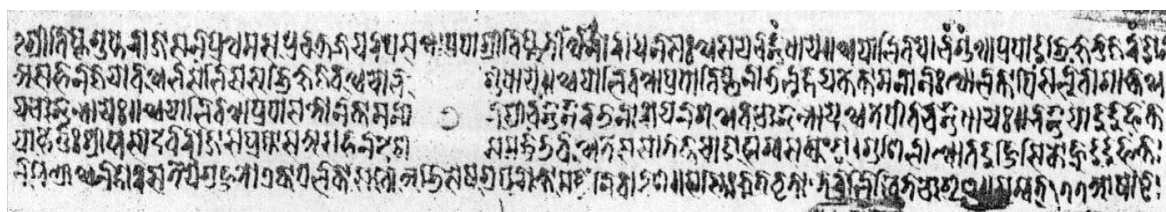
¹⁷ Translation into English language by Malla in *Ibid.* pp. 123-124. It must be noted that Malla's translation do not exactly follow Vajracārya's reading of the MS, and has been much criticized by Dr. Maheś Rāj Pant (1993).

¹⁸ Vajracārya's reading in Vajracārya and Malla (1985:38). The symbol *m* based on IAST scheme has been retained though it is phonetically different in *Nepāl Bhāṣā* as in this extract.

milky stalk and leaf of the plant *Arum Colocasia*. This was propitiated. [The King] was guided by a dream in which [he] was advised to boil and offer the milky plant at the entrance (of the temple of Caṅguṃ) on Śrāvaṇa Śukla Dvitiyā. Anoint the Lord with yellow and black mustard seeds and the root of the plant for nine days. Then the land/people will be protected from the epidemic. The epidemic will be contained.¹⁹

Again, as in the example #1, the date is different here too — *Śrāvaṇa Śukla Dvādaśī* is the actually day when the Lord *Cā(n)gu Nārāyaṇa* is offered such *voga* (feast) of taro (called *karkalo* in *Nepālī* language) and the journey is thereafter set, and not in *Dvitiyā* as mentioned in the VG.

Figure 2: Folio 30b of VG



Source: Vajrācārya and Malla (1985:7)

#3. *Lakhva Jātrā* (Folio 57b, 59a and 62a):

Lakhva jātrā meaning the festival to invoke the god of rain is not much heard of now-a-days in the same degree with which the VG mentions it. Different folios in the VG (viz. folio 57b, 59a and 62a) mentions of this *jātrā* but is not that common now.

Let us first look at how the above-mentioned folios mention of the *Lakhva jātrā*. Line 2 in folio 57b of the VG mentions the celebration of festival by the cities of *Banepā* and *Panautī* thus:

2: ... sa 497 eṃdalā gākva tīhriśi kohnu byenāppā pvanantīna, lakhvayāta yāñā ||²⁰

In N.S. 497 [i.e. 1377 AD or 1434 B.S.], on *Bhādra Kṛṣṇa Trayodaśī*, *Byenāppā Pvanantī* ([nowadays] *Banepā* – *Panautī*) observed the *Lakhva Yāta* (the *jātrā* for begging rains).²¹

The celebration of *Lakhva jātrā* is also mentioned in folio 59a, this time in *Bhaktapur* itself (the city, where

the VG was compiled). Lines 2-3 in this folio 59a of the VG mentions:

2: sa 500

3: *jeṣṭha vadi 3 śvapvannaṃ lakhva yāta yāñā, puvā boye majārañāṇaḥ ||*

In N.S. 500 [i.e. 1380 AD or 1437 B.S.], on *Jyeṣṭha Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā*, the *Lamkhva Yāta* was observed at *Khvapo*. This was done because the growth of paddy-seedlings was delayed (due to the failure of rains.)²²

There is yet another instance of the celebration of the *Lakhva jātrā* in the VG. This comes in line 1 of folio 62a:

1: ... sa 504 *jeṣṭha vadi 10 jhārhana thaṃna lamkhvayāta yāñā dinaḥ thvalāna avanahnāmado ||*

In N.S. 504 [i.e. 13834 AD or 1441 B.S.], on *Jyeṣṭha Kṛṣṇa Daśamī*, *Jharhanatham* observed *Lamkhava Yāta*.²³

It is interesting to note that the celebrations of *Lakhva yāta* or *Lakhva jātrā* comes in very late folios only, the very first mention falling as late as folio 57b (i.e. from N.S. 497 or 1377 AD). It is then a matter to study if the drought then was of so great a magnitude that the festival deserved the mention, or was the festival too great, or it received any state-patronage. It may also have been that the chronicler added this as a part of his knowledge.

The time of this festival is *Jyeṣṭha* (May - June) and *Bhādra* (August - September). The valley normally sees much rainfall from July till August, and is considered excellent for agricultural production.

Very few of such rain-begging festivals are popularly practiced now, except that most are inter-mingled with some other popular festivities. One such practice is *la-pya-ke-gu*, practiced by the peasant communities of *Pāṅgā* village, as recorded by Dr. Nepālī (1988:41).

It is obvious that in such cases of historical importance, the *vaṃśāvalī* prove a historical record, however fumbled its facts may be. Where writing (or copying)

¹⁹ English translation by Malla in *Ibid.* p. 134. Difference of Malla's translation against Vajrācārya's reading is evident in this extract. Also, Malla uses *Cā(n)gu* as Caṅguṃ, but I prefer to use the former here.

²⁰ Vajrācārya's reading in Vajrācārya and Malla (1985:65).

²¹ Translation into English by Malla in *Ibid.* p. 159.

²² Same as footnote #20 (p. 67) and #21 (p. 161).

²³ *Ibid.* p. 70 and p. 163.

such *vaṃśāvalī* itself has been considered an act of piety (Leinhard, 1988:xvii), it is easily understandable that chroniclers then were well aware not to lose any of these precious historical "heritage information" long into the future. What if there were no *vaṃśāvalīs* in the form of historical narratives, like the VG? One assertion by Malla (1985:iv-v) is of relevance here to see the importance of VG:

In the midst of ... Dark Age of Nepal's mediaeval history [in Malla's words, "the big hiatus between the fizzling out of the Licchavis (c.a. 8th – 9th century AD) and the rise of the Mallas at the beginning of the 13th century AD"], this chronicle [VG] is nearly like an unfailing lighthouse. ... [T]his chronicle is one of the major sources of historical and cultural data which deserve to be assessed.

Though in that case, the VG makes use of materials already established by mid-11th century, it cannot be denied at all that it is important for modern readers and all seekers of historical knowledge. This is particularly more significant in the context of ICH, than that of tangible ones because of its dynamic nature.

Conclusion

Now that Nepāl is already a state party of the *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003* and that the Government of Nepāl has already worked out a *National Cultural Policy 2067* (2010), there are a lot to do in this sector. Often it has been seen noticed that the bureaucracy do not have proper information on the heritages they have been working for. This is further made the most problematic, when no written documents and/or any other records of significance are easily available. In those cases, there are no options but to go for oral tales, legends, lore, beliefs and the existing rituals, practices and tradition, as a start.

However, in all such circumstances, the local *vaṃśāvalīs* must be seen as an important reference. Although purists of history and often linguists may question them for various obvious reasons, their importance in understanding the then society cannot be denied at all; and so undeniable is the fact that such magnanimous amount of "heritage information" has been crafted in such historic *vaṃśāvalī* writings. It can, thus, not be disagreed that these *vaṃśāvalīs* must be preserved²⁴ and studied so as to gain further heritage information and knowledge, though not entirely authentic from a historian's perspective.

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²⁴ In lieu with the *National Cultural Policy 2067* (2010).

Radio in the Urban Context: How Can Radio Attract Audiences of Newer Municipalities in Nepal

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Abstract:

Radio is mostly connected with rural areas, where other mass media forms seldom exist. The use of radio in urban context, however cannot be denied however; this has been well-exemplified in the aftermath of 7.8 M earthquake on 25 April 2015 and the subsequent aftershocks. New municipalities have been declared in Nepal without much preparations, and many lack basic infrastructures of transport, health and communications. Now that radio is thought of for the rural, the newly transformed municipalities too can use radio to raise discourse with urban audiences on different relevant urban issues.

Keywords: radio, urbanization, new municipalities, metropolitan, urban listenership, audiences

Background ¹

Radio broadcasting formally started in Nepal with the establishment of Radio Nepal on 1st April 1951. It became the only electronic media in the country till the establishment of Nepal Television in 2042BS. The development of electronic media took rapid momentum after introducing the National broadcasting act in 1994 that paved the way for the private investment to open FM radio stations and television channel. Currently, we have more than 565 registered FM radio stations.

Electronic media like radio broadcasting is the most effective medium of mass communication for the country like Nepal due to various reasons such as weak transportation facility, high illiteracy rate, and low purchasing capacity. There's no question that radio broadcasting is the only means of information, education and entertainment for many people living in the rural part, but it also doesn't mean that radio broadcasting is not popular in the urban areas. This article has tried to find the relevance of radio broadcasting in urban areas exploring the radio listening pattern of urban people.

The country has 94 municipalities, 11 sub metropolitan cities and 1 metropolitan city and the daily lives of the people living there have been affected by radio in one or other ways. No urban people can escape from the

influence of radio broadcasting as they do listen it while travelling through public transport, shopping from street vendors to departmental store, eating at restaurant and passing through the footpath. The credit also goes to the development of radio software inbuilt in cell phone that made radio listening easy. As radio is considered a cool media, for many urban people it has become an intimate friend for them while driving, jogging and doing other works.

This article will explore the radio listening habit of urban people through listenership survey in selected urban areas in the capital city.

Urbanization: The Context of New Municipalities in Nepal

Two antonym terms — 'rural' and 'urban' do not have a clear and universal distinction. There are some general understandings to it; however, states adopt them to suit their contexts.

In Nepal, the *Local Self-Governance Act, 2055 (1999)* defines the urban and its different categories. The act states municipal area as "[h]aving a population of at least twenty thousand and with electricity, roads, drinking water and communications facilities". ² But the sub-clause (2) of Article 72 makes an exception for the areas of hilly and mountainous area as "having a population of at least ten thousand and with

¹ The author would like to extend gratitude to Abhas D. Rajopadhyaya and Janardan Bista for all their assistance in both the research, translating and writing this article.

² Article 72: Specification of Municipal Area and Center of Chapter 1: Municipal Area, Ward Division and Ward Committee in Part 3: Provisions Relating to Municipality of the Local Self-Governance Act, 2055 (1999).

electricity, transportation, drinking water and communication facilities, as a municipal area".³

Article 88 of the Act defines the three types of municipalities, viz. Municipal Corporation, Sub-municipal Corporation and Municipality. The table below gives a general requirement for each of the above-mentioned category as specified by *Article 88: Classification of Municipality* of the Act:

S. N.	Category	Population	Annual Income
1.	Municipal Corporation	At least 300 thousand	Minimum 400 million
2.	Sub-Municipal Corporation	At least 100 thousand	Minimum 100 million
3.	Municipality	At least 20 thousand	Minimum 5 million

Alongside these pre-requisites, this article also requires the following facilities for Municipal Corporation:

electricity, drinking water and communications, ... main road and accessory roads of the town pitched, availability of highly sophisticated nature of service in respect of health services, ... necessary infrastructures as required for international sports program, availability of adequate opportunities for higher education in different subjects and ... at least one university established and other similar adequate urban facilities and ... already been existed as a Sub-municipal Corporation.

Similarly, there are few lesser pre-requisites for Sub-Municipal Corporation:

million rupees, having the facilities of electricity, drinking water and communications, having the main roads of the town already pitched, having the facilities of higher level education and health services, ordinary facilities for national as well as international level sports program, having the provisions of public gardens and city halls and other similar necessary urban facilities and having already been existed as a Municipality.

A semi-urban area is one "with a population of at least twenty thousand, and annual source of income of minimum five million rupees and with electricity, roads, drinking water, communications and similar other minimum urban facilities", except that in the case of mountainous and hilly areas. In such areas, a population of at least ten thousand and annual source of income of minimum five hundred thousand rupees shall be sufficient, even if there is no road facility.

Government has taken the vision of village-less nation and has acted in this direction since long. In 2053 BS Government added 22 municipalities with total

number reaching at 58. In 2071 BS, government added additional 72 municipalities reaching total number of municipalities at one hundred and thirty. And, in the same year government announced 61 new municipalities reaching the total number of municipalities at 191 including 7 metropolitan cities. During the interval of almost two decades, just an incensement of 131 municipalities is seemed far behind in line with the vision of the government.

2053 BS	22 municipalities added, total municipality number = 58
2071 Baisakh 25	72 new municipalities added, total municipality number = 130
2071 Mangshir 16	61 new municipalities added, total municipality number = 191 (7 sub-metropolitan cities, 61 municipalities)

The following table compares municipalities before and after declaration of new ones in 2071 BS.

Number	Before 2071	After 2071
Metropolitan city	1	1 (Kathmandu)
Sub-Metropolitan cities	4	11
Municipalities (including metropolitan and sub-metropolitan)	58	191
Districts without VDCs	0	2 (Kathmandu and Bhaktapur)
Most number of municipalities in a district	2 (each in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur)	
Number of districts without municipalities		8
Total percentage of city residents		36.8 %

Many of the newly-declared municipalities have been haphazardly declared. A lot of issues remains unsolved in regards to these newer municipalities, which have not been fully solved yet. Some of the major issues are:

- In some cases, even in the Kathmandu valley the boundary of the municipalities are debated, and so is the merging of different the then village development committees (VDCs).
- The naming of different newer municipalities is also widely debated, as some names are too long. Similarly, the identity represented by the municipalities name are also questioned.
- Many of the new municipalities are still deprived of different facilities and infrastructures as mentioned by the *Local Self-Governance Act, 2055 (1999)*. Many of the new municipalities still hold almost rural-like characteristics.

³ *Ibid.* Sub-clause (2).

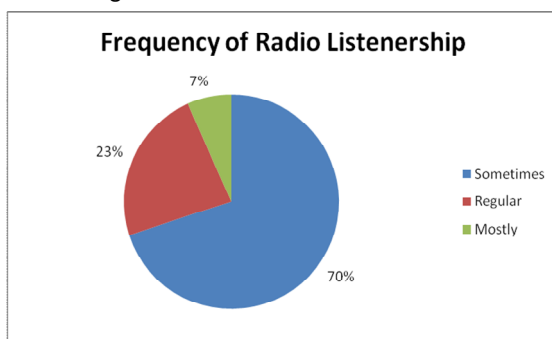
- Where different VDCs would have usually taken charge, now a single municipality is responsible. Due to this many have questioned, how well they would address the issues of every corners. This especially stands problematic at places where the transportation and communication facilities, including many others have still not reached.
- One important aspect that should have been addressed before the declaration of newer municipalities is their social composition. With diverse compositions based on different population characteristics, some municipalities are seemingly not socially coherent with each other, as the issue of their diverse needs and characteristics may not have been fully learnt.

Rural Characters in Urban Area

The transition of many areas into the urban is only paper-based and no significant changes have yet been seen or felt, in terms of facilities and infrastructures. While most new urban areas even in the valley do not have basic health, education, transportation, drinking water and communication facilities. In this context, many municipalities still hold rural or rural-like characters, as the basic lifestyles are the same and have not notably changed.

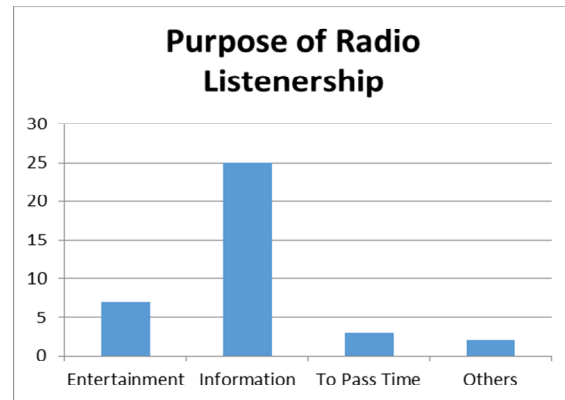
Pattern of Radio Listenership

The data from a survey of 30 respondents Kathmandu valley conducted in 2015 between age group 18 to 50 show that almost all the people listen to radio, though not on a regular basis.



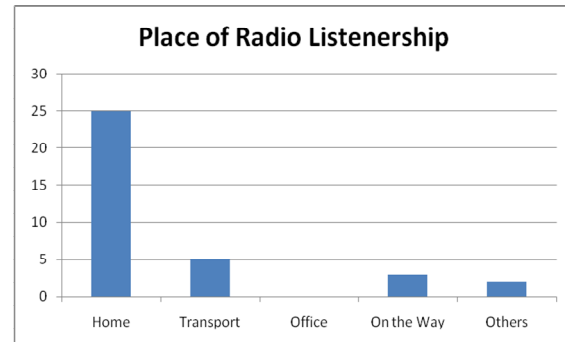
This survey has revealed the listenership pattern of Kathmandu valley. The chart above indicates 70% of respondents listen to radio sometimes, 23% regular and 7% mostly listen to radio. Only one respondent said he never listened to radio.

Purpose of Radio Listenership



The main purpose of radio listenership is clearly for information. The bar diagram presented above indicates majority of people do listen radio for information and entertainment.

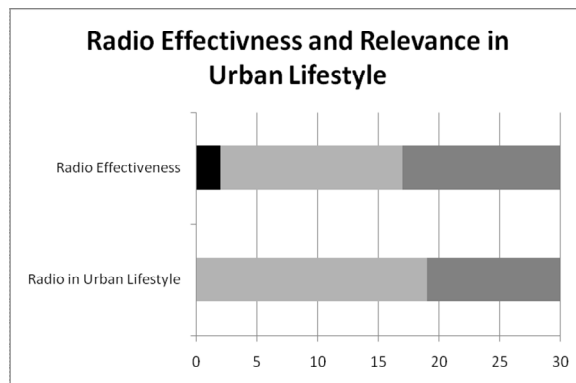
The next graph shows that most people most respondents in urban area listen to radio at home, while few listen to it in public transport and on the way. Also, the same survey finds that most people use their own, portable radio set to listen to radio, while some report that they play radio as a background at shop to pass time.



Radio Effectiveness and Relevance

The following chart shows the effectiveness and relevance of radio in urban lifestyle. It is to be noted that herein this graph, the light grey refers to those who say radio is generally effective and relevant, dark grey as moderately effective and relevant and black is highly effective and relevant.

The chart in the next page indicates that most see radio as generally effective and its use relevant in urban lifestyle. Some see it moderately effective, and very few see radio highly effective for the urban lifestyle.



It must be noted that none in this survey stated that radio is not effective or not relevant in the urban scenario at all.

Fast adaptation to new technology is a peculiar urban characteristics. With prominent use of social media and other forms of mass media, the urban audience generally forget the old, traditional forms. These may only survive in mere name only, or only as a ritual. The case is, however, not so with print media (newspapers, magazines and books) and somewhere FMs.

Nepal Government addresses the policy of radio entirely based on Communication Policy only, as there is no separate policy. The need to bring radio into urban use is highlighted in this research article.

Urban Issues to Address ⁴

Numerous issues can be identified for the radio to address regarding the urban area. In the following list is discussed some of the issues, but not limited to these, that radio can use to address urban audiences:

- Urban poor is one important issue that radio can address. While most works in poverty alleviation is centered at rural areas, the 'urban poor' too deserve equal attention as it has become problematic. Radio can effectively raise the issue and help society resolve cases on this.
- Another prime concern modern day is of urban safety. With most people working and that too for long hours, plus even working overnight as characteristic to urban areas, the safety is a major concern. Not just individual safety from general criminal offences, but safety of the large urban infrastructures too is a major concern. Recent 7.8 M quake too showed weakness of some urban buildings causing deaths and injuries for many. Radio can effectively be a 'friend' to individuals and raise the issue to concerned.

- Land management in the urban areas is another area where radio can raise the debate. Different municipal corporations have prepared general guidelines of open, green and eco-plus-energy-friendly spaces, so as to neutralize the possible hazards from concrete jungle. The need for this has also been realized in the recent Nepal quake.
- Managing natural resources for the urban is a complex issue. For instance, in rapidly developing city as Kathmandu, the problem of drinking water management is vital. The much-hyped Melamchi project is still a play on Kathmandu's aspirations.
- One major concern for the urbanites is heritage conservation, which is associated with tourism and then to the national economy. The need of regular maintenance and preservation of the heritage sites has been well pointed in the recent quake that damaged many sites, including those in World Heritage Sites in the valley.
- Where mega-cities of the world are moving towards energy-friendly green cities, the talk has grown louder that every city must be self-dependent for its energy needs.
- One important area that has been newly found where radio can be the most effective means of communication is during the crisis situation. This has been best exemplified in the recent 7.8 M Nepal earthquake dated 25th April 2015 and the larger aftershocks thereafter, including those of 26th April and 12th May 2015. In the entire period, as aftershocks are still on, radio proved the most effective media, with *Radio Nepal* and others serving people in the crisis period.

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⁴ op.cit. Rajopadhyaya, Om D. (2014, interview at his residence)

Social Media: A Communication Revolution

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Abstract:

Social media is now a significant, parallel communication channel in our daily lives. It has been marked an advanced, easy and accessible human communication technology, making possible the networking of almost all people around the world. Its dynamic and customizable nature has made it a parallel communication channel that befits almost every avenues of personal, group, community and organizational levels of communication. People have highly benefitted with social media in exchanging and informing, which has resulted even to social and regime-change. On the other side, nevertheless, it has also been used for libel, defame, hate speech and has many a times challenged privacy concern.

Keywords: user-generated, viral, share, social engagement, Arab Spring, Dil Shova, social media revolution, parallel communication channel

As technology has been easing people, the human progress in technology is resultant onto revitalizing communication behavior as well. The advancement in internet technologies and cellular phones has been miraculous. The outcome of long-run advent of communication technologies i.e. audio/visual, photo, text are now served in one portal, catering the services of exchange of communication at one's choice. Not so long ago, these services that we chose in different portals have now been customized, and has amplified¹ our communication. A new platform for this new advent in social communication has commonly been referred to as 'social media' these days. Social media is a tool for social communication regulated through the networks of online users.

Social media is user-based online media processed through sharing of user-generated contents, webbed among multiple users. The advent of technologies have brought the portal, whereby we can acquire the information through textual, visual, audio, graphical form giving users a high leverage for quick feedback, extending networks to global community.

Social media has the most active users around the world than any other single media, crossing the number of billions. Social media giant, Facebook, alone has 1.49 billion of active monthly users around the world, according to a report² of June 2015.

For other media, there is a question: how to become popular? While the puzzle still need to be solved, social media is a must. Social media has not helped brought down other media, but is an integral part of them. It has brought revolution in communication behavior of an individual, family, society, organizations — both governmental and non-governmental, private companies and in the mainstream media itself. The revolution thus brought social media as a parallel communication channel.³

Historical Development of Social Media

Social media, though it sounds relatively new, but its origin and existence has been aged long as human started to speak and interact. If taking aside the Internet revolution, then we can summarize as the media used for the social interaction purpose can be simply called as social media. The trend and nature of media has been changing over the period of human evolution. Human nature to interact with people, sharing the story, informing fellow beings, building the community is the outcome of the human evolution, so our relatively new term has the history and its roots connected to the human evolution and its development.

With technology, the forms of interaction also changed, and is still continuing. For instance, from letters, use of pigeons, slowly it shaped written forms. The advent of electronic era, telephone and other gadgets shaped human communications and gradual

¹ Amplified: In SMCRE process of communication, when the feedback is exchanged fast, it accelerates communication between the sender and receiver.

² Facebook produce its quarterly report every four months.

³ For a detailed discussion, see Shrestha (2014).

development of wireless communication with radio as mass communication led revolution in communication sector. Now, people in distance can talk and listen without any cables or any medium. It does not end here — the world has entered into visual glamour as television (TV) showed visual appeal. It was like the world gained its eyes in addition to ears, making stories to more realistic.

Next started era of computers and internet. The chapters and definitions of communication started to change rapidly onwards and in few years it marked paradigm shift in communication behavior of people around the world. Internet brought revolution in terms of communicating with people. Email, instant messaging, live videos, discussion forum, videos and images platform started bringing people together in a single forum. World became very small place to interact, as one could easily connect to another in no time. This revolution of internet started giving people a place, where they could connect and make a larger community in their own participation. This paved the way to era of social media.

In modern days, social media is synonymous to internet-based media or online. But it has come quite a long way to present shape from "Phreaking Era" to advanced form of "Social networking" — a journey that took almost over sixty years.

Phreaking Era: Phreaking era, considered to be started from 1950s to early 90s. *Phreaking*⁴ is the slang term coined to describe the culture of the people who study, explore and experimented telecommunication system, which apparently in case of Joe Engrassia, a 7-years old blind boy cracked the security network with high-pitch sensitivity allowing making phone calls for free. A telecommunication practitioners soon engaged in cracking the device, which ultimately discovered the devices which allow them to make phone calls and access them to the back end. Later hacked corporate mail system 'code-lines' was discovered to produce first blog/podcast allowing people to make calls with voice mail system, where phreaks would later update.

Bulletin Board Systems: Commonly known as electronic Bulletin Board Systems, it was first developed by Ward Christensen in 1979 and went on to progress till 1995. It is a small server, attached to computers, which can access through modem one at a time, where people can download software and exchange public message through boards.

Commercial online services: It is service that ran from 1979 till 2001, by which people, from home PC through can download files, programs, news articles, chat rooms and electronic mail services via dial-up modem. First commercial online service provider was CompuServe in 1979.

The World Wide Web: From 1991 till now, it is currently on progress giving billions of users an unlimited service of internet. In early years of 90s, it was only limited to university, military and government.

IRC, ICQ and Instant Messenger: It came into existence only from 1983 to 1996, but left a footprint of real-time update. Instant Relay Chat (IRC) is created in August 1983, which allows users to update real-time news and direct from sources. IRC helped to develop instant-messaging system. ICQ allows users to have avatars and allow use of emoticons. Later, instant-messaging were lined up with email clients of Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail, whereby people can chat with their friends in their contact list in real-time.

Peer-to-Peer, bit torrent, social media sharing: The primary concept of sharing in social media is developed from file-sharing with idea of peer-to-peer, which allows people to download and share files and links. This was developed in 1991 and is still in progress.

Social Networking Sites: With chat, share and downloading file and connecting to friends, social networking sites was shaped up to as it is now in advanced forms as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and others. It was classmates.com and sixdegrees.com established in 1997 allowing people to create a profile and connect with friends.

Social Bookmarking: Bookmarking allows people to manage, store, search for the bookmarks of online resources. The concept first started with the website called it list in 1996 later on website named delicious founded in 2003 made it prominent by pioneering the term tagging for the book marking.

Blogs: Blog is commonly called web logs which is a journal written in website. Although there were already existed bulletin board system, Usenet, Internet forums but in 1994, Justin Hall created first blog called *Justin's Home Page* and then the era of blog flourished with the advancement come along with the time.

Real-time and Location-based Social Networking: with the advancement of the technologies and early footprints people opted for the real-time basis of

⁴ As defined in the book "Understanding Social Media".

updates as people wanted information. In 2006, micro-blogging site called *Twitter* started as real-time stream updates, with unique 140 characters limit. Then, other social media also started incorporating real-time land-location based features.

Social Media

In recent years, the perception and behavior of Internet usage has changed drastically because of social media presence. Social media is a web-based application where users generate their own content in form of text, visual, audios to share and publish through the networking with people. Merriam Webster defines it as "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (as videos)", thus implying a simple understanding that social media is a forum whereby people build a community through networking.

Features

Social media is user-generated: The basic feature of the social media is that it is user-generated media. Social media users can have identity of individual, group, organization, community, company, government agencies, etc. In *Facebook* itself people can have personal identity or create a page for company too. The very existence of social media depends upon contribution of content by users, otherwise it does not work. Unlike other media like television, internet-based news portal, print, radio are run by one defined authority where users are expected to receive information, social media like *Facebook*, *Twitter* are run by user-generated contents and are not run by a defined authority.

Social media is network-based: Social media can be said as a virtual social portal with a high significance in real world. Users try to expand its network to share and receive information from others as well. Social media does not run single-user, thus its essence is to collectiveness. In general, horizon of social media expands only because of a network established by its users. Unlike blogs and websites, social media functions by expanding these networks.

Social media is an active media: Social media is rampantly engaged media due to various features of social engagement suitable for various individuals, different companies, organizations and groups. Its customized features has helped users from various

background and interests. Social media today has progressed from various levels and now has a capacity to expand to every corners of the world. Every business has social media accounts; conversely, it is an easy portal to search for product and services, promotional place for products and services from where producers and consumers can both benefit. Various campaigns, events, social causes can be supported and promoted; there have been ample examples from Dil Shova Shrestha case (2014), *Citizens' Concern for Peace and Prosperity* (2010) and successful events contributed majorly through social media. It has become hub for social interaction, exchanging information and help, and it too has been a hub for marketing, promotions, events, campaigns for various social, political and entrepreneurial motives helping people get engaged in one way or another.

Feedback is social media: Social media changed the phenomenon of how feedback in communication process is perceived. It created revolution in showing the swiftest method of feedback in any form of communication. People can just send their feedback in seconds of content being posted. These social media terms have now become common — like, share, comment, reply, tweet, retweet, pin, dislike to name a few. These terminologies define the feedback process in social media. Unlike other traditional media social media are quick in feedback. The promptness of feedback in social media does not only help change the paradigm, but it acts as catalyst to accelerate the communication process. This is where social media is quick than any other mass media forms.

Social media is a sharing media: The very essence of being a 'social being' is that we 'share'. The human characteristics of sharing have shaped our civilization. Since social media itself is social, it has the essential sharing feature, and provides an easy way to share contents from anywhere. The newsroom of *Facebook* (newsroom.fb.com) enlists its mission "to give people the power to share and to make the world more open and connected", illustrating the value of sharing amongst the people. This features of sharing has resulted in making people aware not in numbers of hundreds or thousands, but to even millions and billions, not only a society but over nations, to oceans and continents. The term 'viral' is also suggestive of sharing in social media. Arab Spring is an example of this sharing effect that resulted into regime change.

Social media is untimely: Social media is an ongoing phenomenon. There is no specific time for publication

or posting contents. It allows user to publish contents anytime, anywhere. Users publish contents without any gate-keeping. It is unstoppable and users around the world can put anything anytime and get updated accordingly, regardless of day and night time.

One interesting fact is that these days, mainstream media are benefited with this feature as they can post news in social media as soon as they receive it and therefore they do not have to wait till publication or broadcasting time.

Social media is dynamic: Social media is not a static media or a conventional, scheduled media. The face and content of social media keep changing due to its very dynamic nature. The vibrant customization features in social media and sharing of such contents have made it more dynamic than others. The growing technologies as tablets, smart-phones have made the use of social media faster and easy. With almost 1.31 billion monthly mobile users⁵ in *Facebook*, and built-in camera plus video have made instant and constant upload a dynamic boost. The inter-linkage of social media to others giving more customization options has also made it more dynamic. Different apps of social media in PC, tablet and mobiles have made it more dynamic and developers are producing different features social media app. Social media has never been the same ever since it started.

Significance

Social media is personal: Social media gives a virtual space for social interaction. Emergence of presence in social media has become rampant as over a billion people use social media every day. That includes generation over generations inside a house. It is now not only considered as sophistication for all ages alike to share activities and behaviors, but has become a channel of interaction for different ages and for people from different walks of life. Social media has taken the position of real world reflection in a virtual territory. The identity of an individual is connected with thousands and millions of people through this social platform. People are conscious towards their posts and comments in this platform as in real life. People maintain social values, ethics and etiquettes also in social media platform, because of the presence of individual identity. People put personal information, about their personal life, their friends and families,

history and present etc. It has now been a platform for social recognition. It has helped people connect their individual identity to a larger community.

Expression is social media: Freedom of expression and opinion is a fundamental human right that UNESCO too enlists in its declaration⁶. It is not just a protocol, but is there in every declaration, constitution as it holds essence of being human. This characteristic of expression and rational behaviour has shaped our civilization. Social media has helped people explore this expressive quality and they can express in a way they want. This very feature of social media has provided platform for people to expression their opinion and helped them exercise emotional and psychological control. It has been place for intellectual exercise and also helped balancing different needs of life. One may not control their exterior environment, but they express their dissatisfaction in a space called social media. This expression is not limited only in personal preferences, but can help a lot in forming collective voice, helping people changes their lives and even to bigger changes in their nations as well.

Social media is social: Social media is a social product. It has helped people to become closer and maintain social relationship, values, bonding, social etiquette, manners and behaviors. It has helped people open up avenues in social communication, social pillars and social responsibility. People share happiness and grief, they greet at special occasions across religions — they are understanding diverse cultural and social backgrounds, and all these are, in turn, making them more social and universal. People exchange wishes on each other's birthday, share messages and expressions. Social and family events are now communicated and channelized through social media. People create friends and social events through social media. This way they now involve in different events and causes. People can now get updates about their family and relatives in a trans-national spectrum with social media. Social media has thus helped to reconstruct the social bond.

Social media is global: We have been listening that the world has been constricted to a small village, commonly called 'global village'. It is indeed a boon of technology that human efficiency of traveling and exploring the world has rampantly increased. Now people are able to explore the world in as little days,

⁵ Source taken form the website of the Facebook company;
<https://www.newsroom.fb.com>

⁶ UNESCO Mass Media Declaration in 1978 A.D. declaring fundamental rights for mass media including the freedom of expression,

and it also includes power to connect with fellow beings from all around the world. One can now interact live and visually, follow people from different corner of the world, share messages with each other, and even get or make viral. For instance, viral syndrome in social media signifies global reach of any content. If any post or content are shared to number as large as millions or even billions, it is considered viral. South Korean artist Psy's "*Gangnam Style*" topped YouTube views crossing over 2 billion. *Tweetverse* is a term to refer to twitter users around the world, composed of two terms 'tweet' and 'universe'. *Arab Spring*⁷ got success due to social media mileage, as it was prime weapon to fight for democracy.

Social media is democratic: Democracy is freedom to live independently and to voice independently. Democratic values are said to exist in places, where people have access to voice and express themselves. In this regards, social media has elevated people's desire to be together and for a common cause. An individual can form opinion and share it to different groups and communities, via social media platform. There are instances where regime-change has occurred due to social media. *Arab Spring* is a great example where countries after countries revolted against authority for democracy. IT has created a healthy practice of democratic values among people. Social media has created value and significance for each individual.

Social Media: A Parallel Communication Channel

In communication cosmos, where each individual nowadays use or tend to use multiple streams, social media has made a distinct mark, especially with its connectivity, multi-media information flow as that of mainstream and compatibility with almost all computerized and smart-phone devices. It has been parallel communication in different walks. Social media have not only challenged mainstream, but in many cases, it has strengthened them.

Mainstream media have its landmark history in communication media. It is a known fact that due to change in mode of communication as people have started using internet for their information need, the big prints and publication houses has switched them to the digital mode. Print version of the newspapers and TVs has started online version but since the change in

consuming pattern of the people have shifted them to keep intact with people so that they keep holding with their audiences. Social media has been beneficial tool for them to connect with the audience. Print versions of newspapers are constantly posting the news in social media irrespective of any time boundaries. It has also been beneficial for the brand in mainstream media as people opted to have news from them as credible source then to be in dilemma of information blizzard. Mainstream media has been benefitted in those circumstances of creating, connecting with people where they have been receiving easy access to advertise and influence people as well.

For ordinary people too, it is a parallel communication channel too. Previously people would opt mainstream media or mobile technologies for communication, now most also use social media. People are constantly getting notifications. The presence of family, friends, siblings, relatives, groups and larger community, social and personal events in audio-visual medium and interactions within a single network has made it a separate communication booth for people.

Social media has been very useful option for social cause, advocacy and campaign and has united people for a cause to bring changes to the society. We have witnessed landmark changes brought by social media campaign and advocacy, for instance in the regime change during the Arab spring. In Nepal, in the case of Dil Shova scandal⁸ and *Citizens' Concern for Peace and Prosperity*,⁹ social media was crucial to disseminate information and opinion formation. Famed social worker, Dil Shova Shrestha, was alleged of involvement in sex trade, on 26 February 2014 in a news published in *Nagarik* daily and its online version. Huge debate in agreement and disagreement was shared from national to international Nepalese diaspora. The news had 2601 shares in *Facebook*, 76 tweets and 7 *Google+* as of 7 March 2014. Social media users launched a great debate, pushing the authority to inspect the case. She was later cleared of the allegations.

Citizens' Concern for Peace and Prosperity was organized by FNCCI (Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries) along with their sister organizations and in collaborations with different private and public organizations to show (non-)political resistances towards the then regular *bandh* and strike in constitution-writing cause. FNCCI used their social

⁷ The wave of revolution in Arab countries that started with dethroning Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, following self-immolation of Tarek Mohamed Bouazizi.

⁸ See: Shrestha (2014)

⁹ See: Shrestha (2014)

media especially *Facebook* to disseminate news across its wings and publics. The change in venue only hours before the program due to political intervention too did not disturb the program, as the information was circulated in rampant way via social media, and the result — ten thousand people turned up in the streets for a national unity.

Social media has become a handy tool for the organizational communication and marketing as well. Social media use by private companies and social-sector is very high. It has been decent tool to publish stories and works done of social organizations, and for social advocacy and campaign. Private companies too has relative advantage as they can create their customers, target customers and connect with them. In America, 70% of business consumer marketer have acquired customers through *Facebook* (Karr, 2014). It has thus helped companies for advertisement, schemes and corporate social responsibility. Each and every organization including private, governmental and non-governmental sectors have their social media account to connect with their public.

Pro and Anti-Social Media Values

Social media has definitely taken its own space in communication field; slowly it has been undeniable as people from different walks of life are creating their profile for their social recognition. Yet there are cases where people have raised issues of privacy, over-consumption and mass surveillance. Founder and CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg states, "When you give everyone a voice and give people power, the system usually ends up in a really good place" focusing on role of social media to empower each individual. Similar thought by Erik Qualman, "We don't have choice on whether we do social media; the question is how well we do it" clearly shows undeniable presence of social media and its impact. Given the fact that there is empowering and undeniable presence of social media, Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Company, opined "I love social media because it exists at the intersection of humanity and technology."

People have different opinion regarding social media. Pete Cashmore on social media states "Privacy is dead and social media hold the smoking gun" to argue that social media presence has affected privacy of people and has challenged their personal life. Regarding the adverse impact, Nicola Formichetti states that, "The dark side of social media is that, within seconds,

anything can be blown out of proportion and taken out of context. And it is very difficult not to get swept up in it at all." It is easy to get things viral in social media, but misconduct in social media would have amplified, irrevocable effect on real lives of people.

As everything in social spectrum has positive and negative sides to it, so does social media in a parallel way. There are limitless positive side of social media and it is thus a boon for human civilization to ease communication process, if used properly.

Social Media: Threats and Challenges

Social media use has almost become daily need for many. Their active involvement not only in receiving but also generating contents has empowered them. But there are drawbacks with such power. With growing popularity, threats and challenges of social media too comes along. Privacy of people is being challenged as it has been easy to track and peek anyone's lives. Cases of blackmail, threat, hate speech and libel are also heard of in social media. Women in general have many a times become victim to such.

Mass information have messed up minds and their credibility too is much often dubious. Social media has been easy portal to share propaganda for various reasons, and to seek sympathy of people. Unlike the mainstream mass media, social media are not credible enough as no particular authority takes responsibility of such information, except the account holder.

In Conclusion

Social media is booming day by day. More avenues of social media are being explored. People are highly engaged in social media for various purposes. With the advancement in technologies and people's access to it, communication has taken new heights, perhaps the best form as possible now. People can now interact with entire world and connect to anyone irrespective of any caste, creed, race, culture, literacy or geography. It is possible to have real-time visual conversation to anyone in any part of the world.

Social media has helped in bringing people together for a common cause, be it the revolution as *Arab Spring*, or the cause of Malala Yousafzai in women education activism or popularizing songs like *Gangnam Style* or even marketing. In every avenues, social media has been in use, and people have widely and actively participated.

Social media has proved to be parallel communication channel in our lives. With its root from age-long civilization of humans, it is shaping from phreaking era to modern social-networking sites. People have hugely benefitted, but yet it has drawbacks that comes with irreplaceable cost. It is therefore necessary to raise awareness against such drawbacks for proper use of social media networks.

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Note to the Contributors

In this very first issue of *KCC Media Journal*, we may not have been able to meet all the following standards mentioned hereafter, as this is only our first step to contribute to the Nepalese mass media, journalism and communication sector.

We shall, however, endeavor our best to meet all the following standards from our forth-coming issues, to the utmost possible extent.

Style

To expedite the review process, we request all authors to submit their contributions based on the format provided underneath, and/or to the style in adherent to the published articles in this journal.

Submission of Manuscripts

The editorial board will review manuscripts for publication in this journal with a basic understanding that it has not been previously published (in full or in part) either in print or electronic form, and is not currently being reviewed for publication elsewhere. Since this is only the first attempt, we have not standardized the number of words but we prefer *Research Articles* of approximately 2,500 to 4,000 words not including references, tables and/or figures. These articles may be based on the mass communication and journalism courses provided by different universities at various levels, or on any contemporary issues on mass media and communication. Preferences shall be given to national and/or local issues that shall be directly useful for the nation, but this does not mean global issues shall be given any less priority. We accept contributions in any of the following forms:

Research Article (approximately 2500 to 4000 words not including references, tables and/or figures)

Course-Based Article (approximately 2500 to 4000 words)

Letters to the Editor (not exceeding 1 page, approximately 750 words)

Book Reviews (minimum 1 page and not exceeding 3 pages)

A contributor should submit the following materials to be considered for review:

A hard copy of their Research Articles

A soft copy to be mailed to the editors

A Brief Bio-Data of the contributors not exceeding 2 pages in an A4 size (8.27" x 11.69"), major positions held, list of publications and/or researches

A passport-size photo of the contributor(s) either in hard-copy or soft-copy to be mailed to the editors

Articles should include the following components, each of these beginning in a new page.

The Title Page

The title of the paper should be as concise as possible, and should appropriately cover everything in the article. The title page shall not be printed in the journal and is only to be submitted to the reviewers.

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The body should be divided into, but not limited to, approximately the following headings (for instance: Background, Introduction, Objectives, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusions).

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